

# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

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# THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY

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## “AMERICA”: THE ORIGIN OF ITS MELODY

By EDWARD A. MAGINTY

AMERICA has a full share of good native music and a cluster of sterling songs she can claim as her own by virtue of creation. A melody by which she sets great store—the carrier of “America,” beginning with the words “My country ‘tis of thee” (*Come thou Almighty Lord*)<sup>1</sup>—is however a relic of the Eastern Hemisphere.

In the 18th century, it held an honorable place in Denmark and Sweden; it was the vehicle of *Dieu sauve la France*; as the dominant partner in *Heil dir im Siegerkranz* it was deeply rooted in the soil of Germany; and wherever the British flag was hoisted was sung to “God save the King.” It had become the valued possession of more than twenty civilized countries, including the United States, by the year 1914, when the Great War spread the knowledge of the tune to the subject races of the principal combatants. It is not intemperate therefore to assert that no sacred song is more widely known throughout the world.

The appreciation of a good thing is enhanced for the artist if he can tell how and whence it came, but it is not surprising that, even among non-musicians, the very catholicity of the melody should have roused a keen desire to learn something of its origin. It is however not so much the aesthetic as the political aspect of the question that stimulates the greater number; for very few are unaware that among the English the tune has long been consecrated as the operative element in their National An-

<sup>1</sup>Also *God bless our native land and Thou whose almighty word.*

them while the Germans have held it sacrosanct as the major constituent in their chief national hymn.

So long as the Georgian Kings were Hanoverians born the incongruity excited little comment, but the time was bound to come when each contestant was in decency constrained to prove, if possible, a prior right. A quest for its archetype was therefore early set on foot in England. Richard Clark, in 1822, made a violent effort to show that the composer was Dr. John Bull and the author "rare" Ben Jonson. In 1902, Dr. Cummings followed up the clues to hand. His learning enabled him to demolish all prevailing theories, but, the available data not being strong enough to lead him to a conclusion, he left the matter in the air. When the best equipped seekers had to acknowledge failure, the puzzle was given up as insoluble and curiosity for a decade went to sleep. The outbreak of the European war reawakened interest and brought the problem home to many who had never given it a thought; for the melody was sung with zest on both sides of the tragic line. That was bad enough; but, in the resulting confusion, particularly on patrol or sentry-go, lives were needlessly sacrificed. The indignant cry uprose in Britain, "The Hun is poisoning the wells!"

"No," the other retorted. "Did we not in 1793 notify the nations that *Heil dir* was traditionally Prussian?"

This was a great shock to British pride. Like the national flag a bond of solidarity and a symbol of empire, the priceless possession of the national song was to be shared forsooth with another. In 1915, a new inquiry was set up, but nothing was added to what had been raked together by Dr. Cummings, viz.: that (1) "God save the King" was first popularized in London during the second Jacobite Rebellion; (2) the adherents of the Pretender were singing it at the same time in Scotland; (3) it was found in black and white in Simpson's *Musicus Thesaurus* (c. 1740); (4) the text was based upon a Latin hymn (at that time known as an "old anthem") *O Deus optime*<sup>2</sup> sung to the familiar air as late as 1688 in

<sup>2</sup>O Deus optime salvum nunc facito regem nostrum  
Sit laeta Victoria comes et gloria salvum jam facito

Tu dominum.

Exurgat Dominus rebellis dissipet et reprimat  
Dolos confundito, fraudes depellito, in Te sit sita spes  
O salva nos.

O gracious God now save our King.  
May joyous victory and glory attend him,  
Do Thou make safe our Prince.  
May the Lord arise, scatter and abase his enemies,  
Confound their plots, defeat their designs: O save us Thou  
in whom  
We found our hope.

James II's Catholic Chapel at Whitehall; (5) Dr. John Bull, a favorite of Queen Elizabeth, had either composed it for, or adapted it to, a galliard or species of minuet, but in G minor in place of the customary G major.

(Readers of this journal will perhaps recall that in October 1916 Mr. Fuller Maitland contributed the welcome point that the anthem was known to the Court of Charles II in 1681.)

As the harvest of 170 years of research, particulars such as these could satisfy nobody. The British claim as against the German still awaits vindication.

Now I do not profess to be able to decide the controversy. That will be a task for some future historian. But what I can do is to narrow down the issue and put him on the right track; for there can be no reasonable doubt that I have lighted upon the prototype of the anthem.

Two factors in the case had long ago struck me as queer, viz.: (1) the general misemployment of the term "anthem"; (2) the unchallenged use of the melody in non-Britannic areas.

Every civilized country has a patriotic song which it proudly calls its national "anthem," but, compared with the B.N.A., there is none that is not a thing of a recent yesterday. France set the fashion going with the *Marseillaise* in 1792; Austria followed suit in 1797; the "Star-Spangled Banner" belongs to 1812; Russia came into the field in 1856.

Whatever else it may connote, the designation "anthem" implies something sacred. I can recall at present only four examples that can pretend to anything like religious inspiration. In savor and movement all the rest are unblushingly secular; yet the title "anthem" is retained; presumably by analogy with the 1688 exemplar. Again: a glance at the dictionary shows that the word is closely restricted in meaning. It is a motet or a mixed-voice arrangement of one or two short prose sentences assigned to a definite place in the Anglican ritual; but the B.N.A. is a metrical hymn of two or more verses sung in unison and much more frequently outside than inside a church. Secondly: while the Whigs were shouting it in London before and after Culloden, the Jacobites were chanting it in the Highlands, yet neither party would have dreamed of sporting the other's cockade. During the World War the German Confederacy never went so far as to hoist the Union Jack but, despite remonstrance, the Germans refused to admit it a breach of the laws of War to turn to their own account the tune of "God save the King." It is impossible to explain these things except on the assumption that the melody was common property.

Common property implies a common heritage and a common heritage points to a far-away period when Europe was more or less united: in government under the neo-Roman Empire, and in religion under the Papacy.

\* \* \*

One of the many bonds of union in mediæval times was in Plainsong or Gregorian Chant of which the most conspicuous element was the antiphon. An antiphon is a short prose passage of 10 to 20 words melodized in the pre-harmonic style and sung in unison before and after a psalm or canticle. From the Greek "antiphon" is derived the English "anthem." Could the B.N.A. have been originally an antiphon? When we first hear of it in the 1680's it is sung in the Stuarts' Catholic Chapel, and in Latin. It is short, the two verses of *O Deus optime* comprising only 37 words. Its irregular build suggests a previous prose. Played in Bull's G minor, its tonality is uncommonly like that of Plainsong.

From these considerations I became convinced that the germ of the anthem was hidden somewhere in the ancient liturgy, and I set out to search for it in the ancient books. I wanted to find a Gregorian chant that would satisfy the criterion of identity. What is that criterion? In the permutations *perat*, *pater*, *repat*, *apter*, *pater*, and *ptera*, Nos. 2 and 5 are identical, but it is the sequence of their letters that makes them so. In the same way two melodies, however they may differ in other respects (key, mode, rhythm, notation, etc.), are identical if their notes succeed each other in the same order. But I could not hope to come upon a melody absolutely identical. I should have to be content with a more or less close approximation, for chants which were composed over 1000 years ago have degenerated even *inside* the Church into Mechlin, Ratisbon, and other versions, which, though running parallel for the most part, at certain points collide. Just as the classical *pater* of Cicero's day has been vulgarized into *père* in France and *padre* in Spain, it was reasonable to suppose that a Gregorian melody, popularized for social or political purposes *outside* the Church, would have undergone even more serious modifications. Recalling the divergencies between John Bull's "ayre" and the 17th-century French and English forms of the same; remembering also that even today one copy of the B.N.A. will show a G<sup>3</sup> between the first A and F while another will omit the D between the last E and C, I was ready to put up with a

\*See light 8th-notes in Ex. 2.

"Gregorian" not more unlike the modern than the three printed versions of *Shenandoah* are unlike one another.

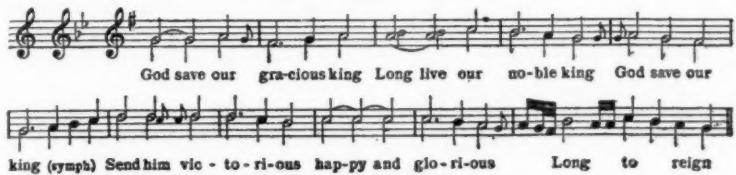
I scrutinized first the unnotated Book of Hours for an antiphon that enclosed a prayer for King or Emperor. I found one attached to the *Magnificat* for the Saturday before the 7th Sunday after Pentecost. Freely translated it runs thus:

"Sadoc the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon King in Gihon; and going up filled with joy they [the people] shouted 'Long live the King'" (1 Kings, 1: 39). (This narrative belongs to the "Histories." In his "Introduction to Plainsong," Dr. Peter Wagner asserts that the historical antiphons were melodized about the year 700 by the Roman Schola.)

I turned to its musical text as shown on p. 818 of the *Liber Usualis*<sup>4</sup> (No. 780), which contains the authentic Vatican recension of the Gregorian Chant. Transcribed in modern notation it takes the following form.



At first sight the melody looked unpromising; but, just as a chemical analyst will experiment upon a doubtful substance by the use of one after another reagent, I altered its outward presentation. Retaining the C clef, I inserted the two flats for Bull's G minor and the single sharp for our own G major signature. I superimposed or added an occasional A or B. I measured off the melody into  $\frac{3}{2}$  measures. I lengthened or shortened a note here and there. The "turn" on the syllable "lae" I indicated in the usual technical way. Notes that appeared redundant I translated into "grace" notes. Lastly I affixed downward tails to nearly all. One thing I did not do: I did not tamper with the succession. The result is displayed below.



<sup>4</sup>Published by Desclée, Tournai.



Read, sing or play over the up-tailed notes and *you have the Gregorian antiphon*; do the same with the down-tailed notes and *you have nearly the whole of the first verse and the first half of the second verse of the British National Anthem*. As almost all the notes have double tails; that is to say, as anthem and antiphon all but coincide, a more striking example of identity between two melodies a thousand years apart can hardly be conceived. When this phenomenon is weighted further by the similarity in theme; i.e., when each upholds a prayer for the king, the mathematical odds in favor of the chant *Unixerunt* (Sadoc the priest) as the original fount of "God save the King" are well-nigh incalculable.

When the manuscripts preserved in European libraries have been carefully studied, the steps by which the archetype attained its present form will some day be made public. Leaving the rock of fact for the ocean of theory, I will, however, endeavor to point out in a few words the probable course of development. (The query after an assertion of fact shows where, for want of sufficient evidence, the conditional rather than the indicative mood would be more appropriate.)

(1) *The missing nine notes.* From the beginning, the *Magnificat* has always been sung with greater solemnity than the rest of the Vespereal psalmody. From the 8th to the 14th century, it was the rule to *triumphalize* its appointed antiphon by the addition of a long *Alleluia* (like that of the *Gradual* today) vocalized upon a *jubilus* running from 50 to 60 notes. Sometimes the last word of the antiphon (as also of the present *Gradual*) was sung to the same *jubilus*,<sup>5</sup> and, if any word were more likely than another to prompt such treatment it was the word *eternum* (*eternity*). There were at this time over 50 of these prolonged *melismata* in common use. Which of these would be chosen for the antiphon *Unixerunt*? Obviously that for the *Gradual* of the same 7th Sunday after Pentecost; at any rate this is the only one that contains the missing notes; for its latter or chorus half<sup>6</sup> consists of a twofold repetition of B C D E D C B A G (with a kind of trill between the C and B and a final three-note figure).

I conjecture also that, by way of further embellishment, in imitation of the custom (still in force) in respect of the Communion antiphon in Paschaltide, an *Alleluia* was inserted after

<sup>5</sup>See P. Wagner, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>6</sup>See *Liber Usualis*, p. 845.

the word "Gihon" and sung to the chorus half of the *jubilus*. This would have a double effect: (a) It would provide the melodic phrase for "over us God save our King"; (b) it would equalize the "verses"; for both the first or cantor's part of the *jubilus* and the tonal portion from "sacerdos" to "Gihon" are carried each on 23 notes.

(2) *Sequences*. The Germanic nations could neither sing nor learn the Alleluia *jubili*. A sentence called a Sequence was therefore substituted. The notes remained, but the word "Alleluia" disappeared. It is almost certain that Alcuin of York, Prime Minister to Charlemagne (780-804) took a foremost part in this development.

(3) *Coronation Ode*. On the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire, Alcuin is said to have been responsible for the initiative in the Coronation of Charlemagne in 800, when the people burst forth in the acclamation "Long life and victory"<sup>7</sup> to the great and pacific Charles Augustus crowned by God Emperor of the Romans." It is agreeable to think that upon the sequentialized antiphon Alcuin built a Coronation Ode in the form of a Responsor in which the Choir sang *Domine salvum fac* (God save our Emperor) and a verse of Ps. 67 (68) "O Lord our God arise," and the Frank and Roman concourse sang the ancient formula "Long life."

(4) *Metre, vernacular and key*. The 12th century developed a craze for metre and the 13th for the vernacular. By the end of this period the verbal side of the antiphon (or Ode) took (?) the shape of the folk-song. As such it could not help conforming to the popular need also in tonality and movement. Its melody shed (?) its redundant notes (including the trill and the last triple figure of the *jubilus*) and became, as now, syllabic. The ecclesiastical mode of the antiphon developed (?) into the modern key of the song: G minor by flattening the B, or G major by sharpening the F. (Most musicians will, I think, agree that our B for the 7th note is a more natural progression from the previous A than the double repetition of the A in the original; but the Gregorian composer was debarred from the use of the B by the rule against the tritone F G A B or, as Edgar has it in *King Lear* [Act I, Sc. III], *fa, sol, la, mi*. As soon, however, as the flat or sharp appeared the B became permissible.)

Before the close of the 14th century, the anthem existed (?) melodically and textually (though in various vernaculars) much

<sup>7</sup>Cf. *Heil dir (Hail to thee) im Siegerkranz* (crowned with victory).

as we know it today. As distinctive of the Holy Roman Empire it was (?) employed as a prayer for the successor of Charlemagne.

When Charles V of Spain ruled over the greater part of Europe it had (?) a wide circulation on the Continent. When Philip II, his son, married Mary of England, then, if not before, it reached (?) the ears of Tallis and Byrd. In Philip's train was the pioneer dance-composer Cabezón<sup>8</sup> from whom William Byrd learned to manufacture galliards and corantos out of medieval chants and folk-songs.<sup>9</sup> John Bull was a pupil of William Byrd. Hence (?) Bull's "ayre."

If the anthem were sung in France in hymn-form it was familiar to Henrietta Maria, the French Queen of Charles I, and long before 1681 their sons Charles and James had caught it either from their mother or their brother-in-law, Louis XIV. James II doubtless wished to introduce it into his own Chapel and, for the guidance of the Royal Choir, requested (?) Lulli to send over the musical copy which gave rise to the theory that Lulli was the composer. Anything but Latin was undesirable; hence *O Deus optime* which appears to have been a rather poor version of some vernacular. The accentual misfits (*nos-TRUM* and *repri-MAT*, typically French) and the future imperatives (*confundito* and *depellito* for *confunde* and *depelle*, manifestly "shoe-horned" into the metre) lend support to this view. After 1688 all is plain sailing. The fact that George I and II were Electors of the Emperor explains the ease with which their supporters took up the old lay.

Whether Britain or Germany has first call to the melody as an imperial war-cry cannot be much more than an academical question for the western world. But it has an aesthetic and historical interest for all.

I have doubtless wandered far from the straight in attempting to trace the course from the *terminus a quo* (the antiphon) to the *terminus ad quem* (the anthem); but the former incontestably was an international asset; from which the comforting thought arises that the melody of *God save the King* and of *America* is the unassailible heritage not only of older nations but of the United States.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For an extended consideration of Cabezón, see the article beginning on p. 289 of this issue.—*Ed.*

<sup>9</sup>Frank Howes, *Byrd*.

<sup>10</sup>For the early history of the poem "America" and of the melody in the United States, see O. G. Sonneck, "Report on 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' 'Hail Columbia,' 'America,' 'Yankee Doodle,'" 1909, pp. 73-78.

## THE STAGE-WORKS OF FERRUCCIO BUSONI

By GUIDO M. GATTI

**I**T is always a bootless task to take one of the diverse activities of an artist and consider it separately from the others. For in the end they all constitute a single activity, and are all closely compounded into his personality. With Ferruccio Busoni the task would seem even more than ordinarily futile. The peculiar multiplicity of his spiritual activities is in itself the salient characteristic of his artistic personality, and an examination of all of them is needed for a full understanding of any one alone. Thus, much that might have been useful for the comprehension and evaluation of the artist is not available, now that the man is no longer among the living. Those who did not know him, who did not converse with him, who did not hear him expound his theories within the circle of his friends and pupils—on one of those not infrequent and memorable evenings when his brain seemed incandescent and his mind transcendent—, they cannot in truth fathom the depth and the originality of his thought.

Busoni was not only a very great pianist, an incomparable interpreter of music, but also the possessor of a composer's personality. We must insist above all on his peculiar gifts as an artist: he was not limited to the practice of music alone; he was open to the four winds of the spirit. For Busoni, music was pure spirit and pure form, soaring without bonds and without weight, never fixed or frozen, but eternally changing, without the restraining attributes of matter or material. He struggled during his entire life against everything and everyone—and above all against himself—to reach the unreachable platonic ideal of liberty; he followed it to its extreme consequences, to the point of paradox. His works, without exception, reflect an intimate tragedy—the struggle between, on the one hand, a Promethean will to achieve purity and freedom of mind, and, on the other, such possibilities of realization as are offered by inert and hostile matter and by our limited faculties of expression. When Busoni says that true music is not in the notes but in the pauses—that is, in those moments of "apparent silence in which a thousand echoes and a thousand harmonies resound, awakened by the sounds that echoed an

instant before"—he finds in what may seem a paradox or a *boutade* the only justification and the only logical consequence of his thought. In those instants music is loosed from all fetters, and is allowed to expand freely. It is no longer a sound but a reverberation, belongs no longer to the senses but to the imagination. ☐

It is clear that an artist as restless and earnest as Busoni is bound to have difficulty in finding the equilibrium and inner harmony needed for the completion of a serious work of art. It is clear that such an artist will not give us the last word himself, but must more often be content with giving us acute suggestions and indications rich in meaning. It is clear, in short, that an artist like Busoni is to be judged not only by what he has produced in his work, but also by what he has given to other artists, by what he has initiated and foreseen, by whatever in his work has become, directly or vicariously, an artistic reality in the succeeding generation.

\* \* \*

In considering Busoni's musical work today, from the Concerto for piano to *Doctor Faust*, there is one thing that cannot escape notice: many of the musical tendencies of today and yesterday were foreseen by him, with a precision and a prophetic clarity that can be understood only if one reflects that every true artist must be in advance of his time. There is, perhaps, not one of the æsthetic concepts formulated in the last few years by musicians who believed they were discovering the unknown that cannot be found, more or less clearly expounded, more or less amply developed, in his collected essays, published in 1923 under the significant title, *On the Unity of Music*.

As regards music and the stage, we do not believe that anything can be found more interesting or more up to date than Busoni's ponderings upon the functions of dramatic music, and upon the relations between libretto and score. It is well known that Busoni was not fond of the Wagnerian drama, or rather of the music-drama pure and simple. The lack of clearness in the Wagnerian conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* made him suspicious of it; he was impatient with its continuous insistence upon the integration of the spoken word with the music, its tendency to denature the essence of the one in the vain attempt at identifying it with the other. Busoni saw the opera in its pre-romantic form as the only possible solution of the problem: an opera with set pieces, in which music has the task—reserved to it alone—of

Rossetto's Harlequin-esque  
 au E.A. Stock (Dendo Melancholico) Francesco Degradi

and S. A. Stock  
in Chicago

### (Rende Arlechinesco)

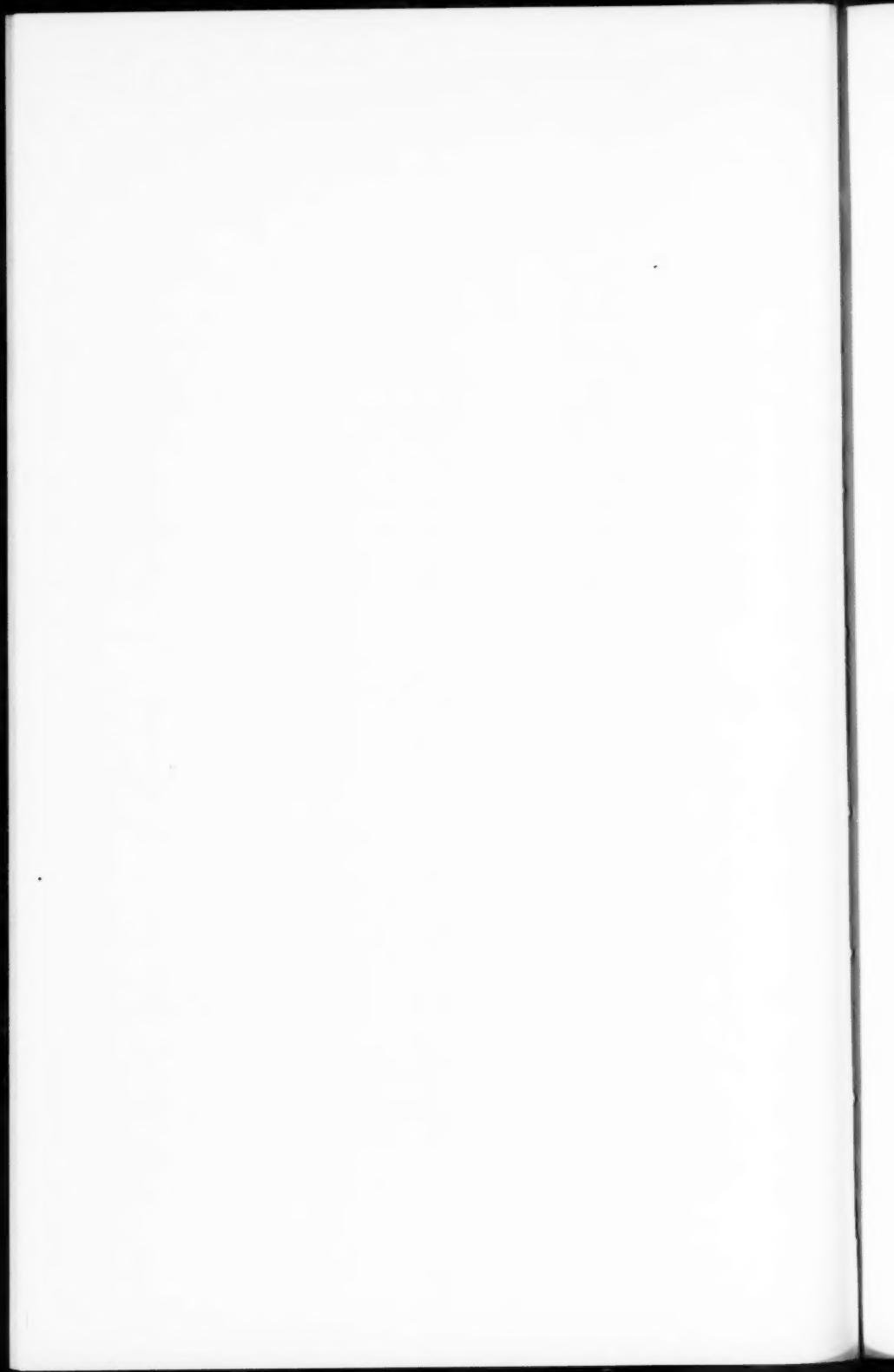
Ferruccio P. f. 19

Allegro un poco

Flauto picc.	{	3	
Flauto grande	{	3	
Oboe Solo	{	3	
Violin. in C	{	3	
2. Violinette	{	3	
Bassoon	{	3	<i>and cancan</i>
2. Trombone	{	3	
3. Trombone	{	3	
3. Timpano	{	3	
③ Tamburo			
Drum			
Tamburo			
Tambour			
Tambourine			
Drum			
Flute	{	3	
Horn	{	3	
Horn	{	3	
Horn	{	3	
Bassoon	{	3	

Gecker: super glücklich, alle auf einer Linie (nicht Notenzyklus)  
zu nutzen.

Facsimile of the First Page of the Holograph Score of Busoni's *Rondeau Harlequinesque (Rondo Arlecchino)*, a concert-piece based on material from the opera *Arlecchino*  
 (By courtesy of the Library of Congress)



making the ineffable evident. He thought that a libretto which could hold the attention of an audience by itself, like a play intended for the stage, was not adapted for musical settings. He considered the ideal libretto one which only the addition of music could justify and make intelligible. As is known, he greatly admired Mozart's operas, and among them he liked best of all the *Magic Flute*, the libretto of which seemed to him ideal for an opera composer—"didactic, spectacular, sacred, and entertaining," all at the same time.

In the loving and astute book that Edward J. Dent has devoted to his friend Busoni (recently published by the Oxford University Press), one can see how the master's conception of the opera first appeared, and how it became clearer and stronger as his experience of the various aspects of art became more mature. And one can see also what a considerable place the opera occupied in the life and thought of this artist who was himself so little "theatrical" in the current sense of the word.

When the young Busoni resided at Frohnleiten, a short story by Gottfried Keller entitled *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* gave him the inspiration for a libretto. He was but eighteen years old at the time. Yet in the last scene the eventually characteristic super-human element already made its appearance. Between 1887 and 1889 he was engaged in work for a romantic melodrama, *Sigune oder das stille Dorf*, after Baumbach. The fantastic attracted him irresistibly, under whatever form it was presented. From a short story by Gobineau, *Der mächtige Zauberer*, he derived a libretto for a "mystery play" in one act. He did not compose the music, but we can read the poem, conceived in Oriental color, in the Schmidt edition of 1907. There followed, in succession, thoughts of a *Madame Potiphar*, of a musical comedy, of a ballet on the life of man, of a philosophical drama based on *Faust, Part II*. Finally, the idolized E. T. A. Hoffmann provided him with the stuff for his first theatrical work, *Die Brautwahl*. The burning fantasy of the novelist-musician seized Busoni at the critical moment of his *Sturm und Drang*.

*Die Brautwahl* is an opera somewhat artificially contrived, turbid and dense. It is anti-classic *par excellence*, in its plot, in the psychology of its characters, and still more so in its musical style. It is clear that in it Busoni has not yet freed himself from all the suggestions of *fin de siècle* music. Strauss and Mahler are still present, even if they are denied his conscious homage. Nevertheless the score is full of clever passages. (We have heard it recently and have found in it a number of precursory suggestions.) But the

opera lacks a decided movement and a solid frame. Its episodes are lengthy, and it grows obfuscated in the search for fantastic expression. The supernatural or magic element—which later the mature Busoni adopted as the axis of his mental sphere—is in this first opera more cumbersome than helpful. There is too much of it, and it does not succeed in standing out and guiding the action. A certain *spielerisch* manner, which Busoni is already formulating in his mind and which will soon remove him from all his romantic past, creeps into the treatment of the plot, but without dominating it. In *Die Brautwahl* his penchant for the opera (in an anti-Wagnerian sense) is shown by the set forms: *ariette*, *Lieder*, *terzetti*, etc., into which the acts are divided. It is evident, however, that the similarity to the pre-Wagnerian opera is all external, and that the strophic form still lacks that flavor of aesthetic necessity which Busoni admired and loved in Mozart. Also artificial and extrinsic are the affinities, which he sought and underscored, between his *Thusman* and *Albertina* and Mozart's *Monostatos* and *Pamina*.

The opera was presented at Hamburg in April 1912, and obtained only a lukewarm success. Busoni did not grieve too much over it, for he was already developing in his mind other ideas and other themes. As far back as 1908, Merejkowski's novel had made him think of Leonardo as the protagonist of an Italian opera. "The historical background of the court of the Sforzas is magnificent," he wrote; "Leonardo could be the central character of the action, like Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*, and even better." The figure of Leonardo had appeared to him also like that of an Italian Faust, admirably fitted to embody the spirit of the race. And he felt with the painter a spiritual kinship greater than that offered him by any other historical or legendary character. Mr. Dent relates the fortunes of the Leonardo project, which, at a certain time, interested Gabriele d'Annunzio also. Busoni had several conversations with d'Annunzio, but nothing came of them, as could easily have been foreseen. Busoni was left alone to think over his *Faust*, to which he was to impart objective reality in later years.

\* \* \*

*Arlecchino* is a product of the war and of the sentiments that the war aroused and reinforced in Busoni's mind. It is true that he had been thinking of a new *Commedia dell'Arte*, and that he flirted with the idea of a scenario of Italian *maschere* with an old Italian city for a background. It is true also—so Mr. Dent in-

forms us—that the figure of Arlecchino took definite form in his thought after he had seen a certain 17th-century play at Bologna. Picello, one of the characters in it, was to prove the prototype of Arlecchino. But the nature of the new characters that Busoni created for his "theatrical caprice" was born from the reaction of his soul against the illogical, monstrous, and grievous situation created by the World War. *Arlecchino* was begun at Zürich, where Busoni had taken refuge in October 1915, and where he remained until 1919, apparently aloof from the feelings of all belligerent countries, but in reality suffering for all. He dwelt there restless, anguished at a fate that struck everywhere blindly, a fate destroying at one blow hopes, ideals, and works of art and beauty. He was far from the imperturbability, the Goethean gaiety, of which someone has spoken with reference to *Arlecchino*, even though there may have been an attempt, an effort to achieve it. True, there is irony in the work, an irony, moreover, that often borders upon bitter sarcasm. Nevertheless, the opera is full of feeling; it knows the accent of genuine pathos. The *Lachspiegel* may deform the body and contort the face, but the grimace is not only, and not always, farcical and amusing. In the midst of all the disquisitions and unravellings and intricacies, we hear the pulse of the heart—not of the intellect alone—and we understand that all these characters are not, after all, simply wooden marionettes.

With *Arlecchino*, Busoni definitely puts into action his principles of theatrical poetry, as outlined in his first essay, "Sketch of a New Ästhetic of Music,"<sup>1</sup> and expounded more thoroughly in succeeding studies, particularly *Von der Zukunft der Oper*, 1913, and *Über die Möglichkeiten der Oper und über die Partitur des "Doktor Faust,"* 1921.

I have already mentioned the essential points of musical aesthetics as conceived by Busoni. A musical drama must not present realistic events, characters that act according to our logic, or happenings drawn from our daily life; a play presenting them makes spectators of us—and nothing more. A musical drama must be in everything the opposite of reality and "truth"; then it makes of each of us, to some degree, an actual collaborator in the creation of the art-work, in the shape in which it reaches the intelligence. The conception of logic is replaced by the conception of the play, which permits the fantasy of the poet-musician unlimited room. The musician ought to look for opera *libretti* either in the realm of fable (and of the supernatural in general), or

<sup>1</sup>First published, Trieste, 1907. An English translation by Theodore Baker appeared in 1911, published by G. Schirmer (Inc.).

in the field of humor and drollery, a field in which a genuine distortion of character may be achieved. The introduction of the element of magic throws such a light even on human episodes that they become transfigured, that is, they are made "fit for music." For music cannot, ought not, fill the libretto from beginning to end. Nothing seems more anti-theatrical to Busoni than a continuous musical flux which aims to express and reinforce everything and comment upon everything. Music intervenes when it is necessary, that is, when the word does not succeed in giving us the complete sense of the action; when the latter, instead of being external, becomes internal; and when what is seen on the stage is no longer made clear by itself. Music, therefore, has in the opera a precise and well defined function; but however indispensable it may be to operatic needs, it ought never lose its force as music pure and simple. Although a true opera libretto cannot be conceived without music (differing in this from a purely dramatic work), an opera score, Busoni writes, even if separated from the text, should still constitute a complete musical work fit for performance; in other words, the music must retain a shape—its shape—even when it is lifted from the dramatic framework which it covers. In the autonomy of music, even while participating, Busoni finds a reason for glorifying the opera of the future as the "supreme, that is, the universal and only form of musical expression. . . . Music, which makes the ineffable evident, which rouses the passions of men and makes them sensitive, but which refuses to describe external events and visible happenings, finds in the opera the most fitting place for utterance." It is evident that the most brilliant example of his conception of the opera is found by Busoni in Mozart's operas, especially in the *Magic Flute*, considered by him as absolute perfection of the type.

*Arlecchino*, we have said, is modelled upon Busoni's ideal operatic scheme. Divided into four movements, it has all the characteristics of a purely musical conception. Arlecchino appears there as a *deus ex machina* in the quadruple aspect of rogue, warrior, husband, and conqueror. The titles of the four parts might be "Allegro," "Heroic March," "Scherzoso," and "The Final Triumph," as though they were the four movements of a sonata. Arlecchino does not sing: he speaks and acts—especially acts—with the rapidity that is his own, and everything comes sooner or later to be encompassed within the sphere of his action. The other characters find themselves under the influence of his tricks and of his indomitable vital force. Matteo del Sarto, a deceived husband who reads Dante and thinks of Mozart, the

Abbot, Cospicuo and Doctor Bombasto, the chevalier Leandro, Colombina and a donkey (*asinus providentialis*), are figures of Italian comedy that are at once classical and conventional. But Busoni has revived all of them with a fresh, personal vein of humor, and with a 20th-century musical taste frankly Busonian. Italian, too, we may add, for the soul of Italy breathes in this *Arlecchino* more than in any other opera by Busoni, and there has not been a German critic or spectator who has not promptly recognized its presence.

When *Arlecchino*—too brief to fill an evening—was given in Zürich, Busoni let himself be persuaded to couple it with his *Turandot*, a work about the death-dealing Chinese princess. But the union was not a happy one. In spite of many excellent musical qualities, *Turandot* does not reach the theatrical concreteness and the organic quality of *Arlecchino*. Perhaps the lack of a central character that could be a fulcrum for the action prevents the parts from forming a satisfactory whole. In judging it, we must not forget that the music of this fable was created originally as incidental music for a *Turandot* adapted and translated by Karl Volmöller and produced by Max Reinhardt at the Deutsches Theater in 1911. Busoni saw *Turandot* as a *commedia dell'arte*, as he had previously seen *Arlecchino*. And he considered as a fable what others—Puccini for instance (who could not do otherwise)—took seriously. Puccini's attitude is illustrated by his treatment of the character of the Princess and of her absurd behavior in playing (is this tragedy?) with riddles and with the heads of her wooers. With Busoni, the fable has remained a fable, as it was created in the strange brain of Carlo Gozzi. Among its characters we are surprised to find Truffaldino, Pantalone, and Tartaglia. But the imagination of the composer has succeeded in giving to several episodes a single style (in the most ample and comprehensive sense of the word), thereby welding together with one stroke the comic and the pensive sides, the grotesque and the solemn. In *Turandot* we find perhaps the best music written by Busoni for the stage; but as a work of art it is not perfect.

There are artistic creations that attract and hold us because of the infinite suggestions and indications they contain of æsthetic ideals which, still vague at the time of creation, become clear and precise only later on. In my opinion, Busoni's *Doctor Faust* belongs to this class. Busoni worked over it, or pondered over it (which is the same thing in the end) for more than thirty years, that is, during practically all his creative period. A peculiarly clear mention of the work that he had in mind appears in a diary

entry, dated October 15, 1910. We find in it a precise indication of the libretto and its musical investiture. The vague thought of Faust's character, in its diverse incarnations, can be said to go back to the author's early youth.

Busoni meditated over this work of his with a fervor and a continuity much greater than he bestowed on any of his other works, and, it must be added, with a jealous love which, even to his most intimate friends, closed his lips on the subject of the work he was fashioning in his mind. When Mr. Dent wrote that the composer spoke about *Doctor Faust* only to Signora Busoni, because the work belonged to her "so intimately and so thoroughly that no one else could understand what place it held in his life," he might have added another observation. Busoni's strong objection to speaking of his work was perhaps caused even more by his having so completely confessed himself in it, and by his having searched, analyzed, and expressed himself in it with such rigor, that he was made suspicious of everybody. He rightfully felt that, if others knew of *Doctor Faust*, they would know everything of him, and that he would remain defenseless before them, deprived of the weapon of irony with which he was wont to defend himself against strangers.

The identification of Busoni with the protagonist of his work has been an easy discovery for his critics. It is evident that Faust, surrounded by his students in the inn at Wittemberg, is Busoni's *alter ego*: indeed, the stage seems to be the composer's apartment at the Victoria-Luise-Platz in Berlin, with the master and all his pupils in solemn conclave. From the critics' identification of Busoni with Doctor Faust to the other identifications that derive from it, the step was short—to Busoni-Solomon, Busoni-Samson, and Busoni-John the Baptist, according to the incarnations of the magician-doctor at the court of Parma. Is it not a kind of self-portrait that is sketched in the following words from the prologue, sketched not without pride and not without accentuating the contradictory features in order to render the internal dualism more dramatic?

... an obstinate and solitary mind, profoundly learned, capable of forcing the doors of Hell, extremely ambiguous, a weak man but a strong fighter, dragged here and there by doubt. A master of thought, a slave of instinct who fathoms all problems without finding any solution. . . .

In the main, dualism constitutes the central motive of Busoni's art and psychology, assuming in turn various aspects. In Faust, in Don Juan—and, we may add, in Merlin, in the Wandering

Jew—Busoni feels the drama of contradiction in action together with a desperate desire for achievement, for serenity, for spirituality. In Goethe and in Mozart he finds the solution of contrast, the superior vision of the artist: the contrast between classic and romantic, between ancient and modern, between Germanism and Latinism is resolved in *Faust* and the *Magic Flute*. The dream of Busoni, who felt co-existing in his soul the demonic of Goethe and the seraphic of Mozart, was to be able to find in *Doctor Faust* the unknown quantity of this equation. In his moments of doubt and discouragement he must have derived great consolation and hope from Goethe's prophetic words to Eckermann about a future musician who might choose *Faust* as his subject: "He ought to be one who has lived in Italy, so that he may be able to temper a German nature with Italian manner and style."

As is known, Busoni did not get the subject of the libretto for his opera from that of Goethe's *Faust*, a subject upon which the stamp of genius had already been impressed. He got his inspiration from the *Puppenspiel*, the marionette show of the 17th and 18th centuries which, in Goethe's early youth, had served to inspire the German poet also. ("In Frankfort, one day, before the gate of the city, there happened to be among the people present a magician who resolutely grasped the puppets of the performance. . . ."—Prologue to *Doctor Faust*.) Naturally, Busoni used the *Puppenspiel* as raw material which he moulded, and to which he gave an artistic expression. The poem of *Doctor Faust* was written in six days in December 1914, the first year of the war. But the idea was so ripe that the poem came out with a perfection of balance, a soberness of style, and a beauty of language, that can truly be said to be worthy of Goethe.

The difference between Busoni's *Faust* and earlier musical *Faust*-dramas is great and substantial. At bottom, Busoni's *Faust* includes more "operatic" situations, more moments that demand the collaboration of music. It is, at the same time, the least melodramatic and sentimental. Sentiment, as it is generally understood by opera-lovers, is, indeed, completely excluded. Busoni has been careful not to stage, even briefly, the episode of Gretchen, of which his predecessors in the operatic treatment of the subject had made so much. This episode would have led him inevitably to the "love duet" which he condemned unconditionally. "A love duet on the stage sins not only against modesty but also against likelihood. . . . It presents within the framework of the opera a situation which in any custom, in any epoch, in any sur-

roundings, always shows the same well-known physiognomy, which interests nobody. . . ."

The action of *Doctor Faust* unfolds in its essential lines according to the scenario of the *Puppenspiel*, but Busoni has drawn the characters with ingenuity and psychological coherence, so that the action itself appears ideally transformed. If the figure of Mephisto stands on a lower level, *embourgeoisé*, deprived of superhuman attributes—except at its first appearance—that of Faust reaches epic heights and stands out with singular relief and clearness. The Platonic-Pythagorean idea which is at the center of Busoni's thought is fully expressed and given life in the character of Doctor Faust. Busoni's protagonist resembles Goethe's Faust and the Faust of the *Puppenspiel* in that he is a magician who goes beyond the limits assigned to humanity, wants to join himself with the Eternal Being, and finally falls into the power of the diabolic forces that gravitate in the same heaven as the forces of divinity. But the three characters differ greatly: Faust in the marionette show is damned because he does not succeed in freeing himself from the bonds of the evil one; Goethe's Faust saves his soul because, at the end, he succeeds in bending the occult powers towards the good and in making them act according to his will; Busoni's Faust is neither damned nor saved, but changes his immortal essence, assumes a new human shape, and acts as a "will to power" that cannot disappear because it is eternal. This will cannot be harmed by being taken into the net of evil, because by its means the individual reaches a knowledge so high, a vision so vast, that he is no longer subject to the power of the devil.

The invocation, slightly colored with "Nietzsche-ism," that Faust, in the last scene, addresses to the child whom he has placed within the magic circle, encloses the nucleus of the conception of a life in motion, in continuous development and transformation. "Blood of my blood, I bequeath my life to thee. Thus I shall still live in thee, and thou shalt create and dig deeper in the traces of my essence until the seed has run its course. Correct my errors, do what I forgot to do, and then I shall triumph over the laws, I shall embrace all the ages in one, I shall mingle with the future generations, I, Faust, immortal will." The generating being may die; the acting being may be transformed, but cannot die.

Did Busoni succeed in creating music adequate to a conception so lofty and grandiose? We can answer this question in the affirmative, adding that, just because of the adequacy to the spirit of the drama, because of the miraculous coherence with the form

and the style of the poem, the musician has deliberately renounced the pathetic accent, the showy motive, the facile rhythm.

In this atmosphere of pure intellect, there is no place for the senses; in this exaltation of thought, even emotion is rarified and speaks a language which it is not given to everyone to understand. Having declared war *a priori* on sensualism, the composer has found in counterpoint—in all the multiple and ingenious aspects of counterpoint—the key to his language. And he has banished every subtlety and harmonic effect which conform—according to what he thought—more to the erotic than to the sublime. In his continuous ambition to free himself from matter, to be cleansed in the azure flame of purification, the music at times is in danger of losing its emotional appeal, and in such an orgy of the intellect one is apt to miss sufficient nourishment. And yet, the genius of the artist proceeds so firmly and unerringly that it succeeds in creating an architecture, solid and at the same time vibrant, which rises to a height attained by very few men of our times.

Busoni's creative life was full of sudden light and disappointment, of enthusiasm and discouragement, a life that he preferred, after all, to the outwardly more successful one of a pure *virtuoso*. But only at the cost of renouncing the latter did he succeed in finding himself, and, like his Doctor Faust, in reaching *his* perfection as an artist and as a man.

(Translated by A. Arbib-Costa.)

## PORTER, PUPIL OF MONTEVERDI

By CHARLES W. HUGHES

WALTER PORTER deserves more attention than he has hitherto received. He lived just at the period when the great outpouring of English madrigals, so richly inspired but so brief, was drawing to a close. Of all the writers of the madrigal school he could have had relations with hardly any but Orlando Gibbons. Gibbons was appointed organist of Westminster in 1623; Porter had been a tenor there since 1616. Both appear in the list of "The Chamber of our late Sovereign Lord King James," Porter as singing man, Gibbons as organist. It is as a composer subjected to varied influences that we must study him. The age of Wilbye, Morley, and Byrd, was past. That of Locke and Purcell was yet to come. It is Porter's indecision—now anticipating the future, now clinging to the past—that makes him a figure of special interest.

A few lines will suffice to set forth the little that can be told of Walter Porter's life: it has already been recounted by Arkwright in his article *An English Pupil of Monteverdi* in *The Musical Antiquary*. Porter's birth date is not certainly known. The article in Grove places it about 1595. On Jan. 6, 1616, he became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal without pay. He was to receive there "the next place that should fall void by the death of any tenor." He had his post before the month ran out. "Peter Wright died the 27th daye of Januarie, and Walter Porter was sworne in his place the first daie of Februarie followinge."

When it was that Porter went to Italy to study with Monteverdi is not definitely known, but Arkwright surmises that the journey took place before 1616-17. The conclusion that he did study with Monteverdi rests on only one bit of evidence. The part-books of Porter's *Mottets of 2 Voyces* are preserved in the library of Christ Church, Oxford. In his introduction to the work, Porter added in ink, after the phrase "my good Friend and Maestro," the one word "Monteuerde."

Porter became Master of the Choristers at Westminster in 1639. In the same year he put forth his first publication, *Madrigales and Ayres*. Then the Civil War intervened, and in 1644 the choirs were disbanded. Their discontinuance broke Porter's career, but the composer was fortunate in possessing a patron in

Sir Edward Spencer, "an Honorable Mecenas to all Virtuoso's known to him," and later in Lady Spencer. Anthony à Wood contributes a note on his later days: "This Person who had been patroniz'd in his endeavors by *Sir Edw. Spencer*, was after his ejection from his office, in the beginning of the grand rebellion, exhibited to in his old age by *Edw. Lawrence Esq.*".

Porter's *Mottets of 2 Voyces* were published in 1657 as a sort of thank-offering to his friends and patrons. He died two years later. In his closing years, musical company must have been hard to come at, for Porter writes rather sadly in the introduction to this work, "The Inducement of my composing of [two] Parts onely, was in regard of the scarcity of Voyces, it being both difficult and troublesome to get two Voyces, much more three or foure together, to Sing Sure and Masterlike."

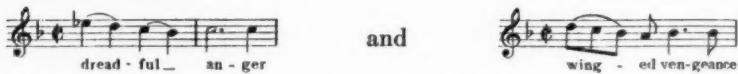
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Porter's first publication, *Madrigales and Ayres*, astonishes by its variety. Here are vocal solos with choral refrains, duets, trios, quartets, and quintets, in varied styles. One suspects that the variety is due not only to the fact that Porter underwent varied influences, but also to the circumstance that this publication was gleaned from a long period of creative activity. Some of the compositions are simple melodic pieces, some are madrigals, some are in a melodious recitative.

The instrumental accompaniments that Porter has provided demand special mention. His *Ayres* are "with the continued Base, with Toccatos [sic], Sinfonias and Rittornellos to them. After the manner of Consort Musique. To be performed with the Harpesechord, Lutes, Theorbos, Base Violl, two Violins, or two Viols." For Porter, toccatas are long introductory movements with changes of metre. Briefer introductions are sinfonias. Rittornellos are employed, according to the strict meaning of the word, only for introductions and interludes in songs of more than one stanza. The bass viol doubles the bass part, while the lutes and harpsichord are expected to improvise an accompaniment and to use the figured bass as a guide. The parts for the two violins are printed in the *canto* and *quinto* parts. The two viols double the sopranos in the fuller sections of the songs. When they are to be silent in the more delicate passages, *Tace* is printed, and they are expected to join in again when the word *Violine* appears above the treble parts. Porter's collection was not unique in having parts for instruments, for Leighton's *Tears and*

*Lamentations* of 1614 and Peerson's two collections (*Ayres and Dialogues*, 1620; *Motects or Grave Chamber Musique*, 1630) had provided for instrumental accompaniments.

The *Motets of 2 Voyces* of 1657 are much more modest and show much less variety than Porter's earlier work. They are set for a tenor or soprano, a bass, and a *continuo* part, which is to be performed on an "Organ, Harpsycon, Lute or Bass-Viol." Some of the psalms are set for two solo voices; in others, verse and two-part chorus alternate. Two other points deserve mention here. First, the *continuo* part is printed as a score with the treble part above it, and must be among the very early printed scores. Second, the number of notes to be sung to a syllable is very accurately shown by printed slurs, though such slurs appear very rarely in Porter's earlier collection. These slurs show quite clearly that the Elizabethan custom of grouping four eighth- or quarter-notes into one and three had given place to the more modern grouping into two and two, or perhaps three and one. Thus we find



but not



as an Elizabethan would have phrased it.

\* \* \*

In studying Porter's work from the point of view of the style employed, we must ask two questions. What elements of Porter's style derive from the English madrigal writers? What did he absorb from the newer tendencies in Italy, and in particular from the works of his "good Friend and Maestro," Monteverdi?

Many of the works in Porter's first collection are true madrigals with the instrumental parts and the *basso continuo* added. Such are the four-part *Death, there is no need of thee*, the five-part *Come louers all*, and the grave elegy for the Lady Arabella Stewart, *Wake sorrow, wake*. Like the other madrigal writers, he delights in illustrating words of the text, such as those suggesting motion or immobility.

Two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "pur - sues his love" and "pur - sues his Love". The bottom staff is in bass clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "binds up all love with in my frozen vaines" and "binds up all love with in my frozen vaines". The notation includes various note heads and rests.

Even in setting the quaint paraphrases of the Psalms by the "Excellent Sandys," Porter cannot always forego the temptation to illustrate musically some picturesque phrase of the text. When Sandys inquires, "Why Mountains did you skip like Rams?" Porter sets it thus:

Two staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Why Mountains did you skip like Rams?". The bottom staff is in bass clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Why Mountains did you skip like Rams? And why you lit - tle Hills". The notation includes various note heads and rests.

Another trick of style that Porter shares with earlier English composers—Byrd, for example—is the simultaneous employment of the raised and the normal sixth step in minor, e. g., of an ascending B natural against a descending B flat, in D minor. In *Looke on me euer* this rather acrid combination appears no less than three times. Imitation, absent in some of the airs, is not entirely forsown. Even in the *Mottets of 2 Voyces* it remains an important element of Porter's musical craftsmanship, while a point of imitation like the following (from his *Come louers all*) might have been written by Morley.

Four staves of musical notation. The top staff is in treble clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "Had he not beene a child,". The second staff is in treble clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "had hee not beene a child, hee would have knowne, would have". The third staff is in treble clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "had he not beene a child, had". The bottom staff is in bass clef, B-flat major, and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "his qui - -ver had hee not beene a child,". The notation includes various note heads and rests.



Porter's use of alternating passages for solo voices and chorus (verse and chorus) was a typically English procedure, one that he may have adopted from Peerson. At all events, Porter, in the only passage in which he discusses his models in composition, names an English, not an Italian composer. "My aim in the composing these Divine Hymnes," he says of his *Mottets*, "was at Good Ayre, Variety, and to marry the Words and Notes wel together, according the saying of that famous Musician, Mr. Robert Johnson."

Porter not only followed earlier English precedents; he set precedents that were followed by his English successors. His duet, *When first I saw thee*, and his trio, *Loue in thy youth*, are in the same vein that was continued, in the Playford publications of the latter half of the seventeenth century, by such composers as Henry Lawes, Coleman, and Webbe. In the trio, *In Celia's face*, we find a sort of melodious recitative which, as we shall see, was the result of Porter's acquaintance with the composers of music-drama in Italy. The use of the recitative style was continued in such a song as Lawes' *To a lady singing*. In short, Porter remained English at bottom, and the innovations that he brought to England were adapted to English taste so that they were easily naturalized and accepted there.

Let us suppose that the one word connecting Porter and Monteverdi had not been written. Does Porter's work show a real debt to Monteverdi and to the trends in music that Monteverdi's work embodied?

Monteverdi lived in a period during which great changes were made in the means of musical expression. He held aloof from none. He witnessed the development of a chromatic style with Costanzo Porta, Cyprian de Rore, and Gesualdo. Monteverdi used the new resource with reserve as an expressive coloring in his

madrigals and solo airs. The reforms of the *Camerata* at Florence, its dramas set to music for a solo voice with the accompaniment of lute or harpsichord, did not cause a violent or an immediate change in Monteverdi's style. Instead of writing dramas, he preferred at first to infuse the madrigal with the dramatic spirit, to model its themes to the inflections of the human voice, to provide it with a *continuo* part and with *obbligato* instrumental parts. Finally, he singled out as soloists the speakers in the lyric dialogue of the madrigal, and restricted the other singers to an occasional choral comment on the passions and actions of the chief characters. Of Monteverdi's work in the field of the music-drama proper, we need not speak here.

Turning again to Porter's works, let us search to find the imprint of the same tendencies that shaped Monteverdi's work. With chromaticism Porter has little to do. If Monteverdi used this resource more sparingly than Gesualdo, Porter is still more chary of it. He does not use the chromatic scale in the dolorous fashion which was customary at the time and which Monteverdi had used in *Piange e sospira*. Yet he too can employ a touch of chromaticism to heighten the expressiveness of a musical sentence:



Porter had his share in the effort to model the themes of the madrigal to counterfeit more subtly and exactly the inflections of the human voice stirred by passion or broken by sorrow. He understood the musical sigh of the descending sixth



and the suave quality of certain sevenths:

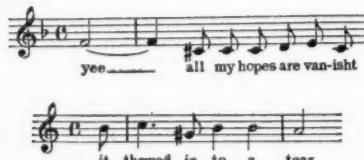


Perhaps the diminished fourth was the most characteristic find of a period that was testing and trying the forbidden intervals to discover their possibilities. This particular interval, to be sure, had not been too strictly forbidden, for it appears in the works of earlier writers. Composers like Porter and Monteverdi, however, found expressive possibilities in the interval that gave it

a new significance. In Monteverdi's hands it finds its use in those tear-drenched phrases in which the voice chokes up with sorrow.



Porter does not employ the device frequently: he does not seek texts that would call for its use, but he knows it and can employ it with telling effect.



“Sighing” suggests to both composers a broken melodic line to picture the catch in the voice and the indrawn breath, i.e., a line such as may be seen in the following example from Porter's *Sleepe all my Ioyes*.

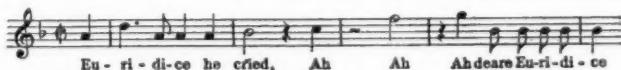


Porter's interest in florid song is still another characteristic that he shared with his teacher. A special feature, which seems to him important enough to mention in the foreword of the *Madrigales and Ayres*, is the *Trillo*. “Where you find many Notes in a place after this manner  in rule or space, they are set to express the *Trillo*.” This ornament, as well as divisions of other sorts, is used chiefly in the verse portions of the one anthem in the collection, *Praise the Lord*, and in the strange soprano solo, *Farewell*. A brief excerpt from the latter follows to show Porter's use of the *Trillo*. It should be compared with some of the more florid passages from Monteverdi's *Orfeo*.



But Porter's connection with the new movement was not confined to technical details such as the *trillo*. He wrote passage after passage in the tuneful recitative which the Italian composers had been the first to use. And he introduced it where one would least expect it—in four- and five-part writing. It appears in his *Madrigales and Ayres*. Although the index to this work announces that there are six four-part pieces in it, inspection shows that only one is written in four parts throughout. Of the others, most are solos with a four-part refrain. In *Tell mee where*, the singers join in four-part harmony only for a few measures here and there. At the beginning, the tenor sings, "Tell mee where the beautie lyes, In my Mistresse or in my eyes," and then asks, "Is shee faire?" The alto responds, "I made her so." Then all the voices join to sing, "Beautie doth from liking grow." Thus, the voices are treated in a way more characteristic of the cantata than of the madrigal. And in similar but larger works by Monteverdi, like the *Ahi come un vago sol* (in the "Fifth Book"), we really have the cantata fully emerged from the madrigal.

So much for a four-part example. Recitative penetrates also the structure of what is otherwise a five-part madrigal. In *Thus sang Orpheus to his strings, when hee was almost slaine*, we have first a five-part chorus, which consists of a setting of the words we have included in the title. Then Porter throws part-writing aside. *Orpheus* speaks through the soprano:



after which the soprano ends rather awkwardly, "and so he died." The lament is taken up by the chorus, and the work closes with the voices repeating one after the other, "Ah deare Euridice, the ebbing winds replied."

But if Porter has much in common with Monteverdi, there is also much that he did not accept. The use of simultaneous suspensions in Monteverdi's music, which so shocked the theorists of the day, forms a very minor element of Porter's style. He knows and can use a telling suspension, as in *Wake sorrow, wake* (measure two), but does not approach Monteverdi's boldness. The Italian's use of the dominant-seventh chord finds small place in Porter's scheme, and when he does use it, as in *Young Thiris lay* (measure eleven), one seems to see how little the first users of the chord were conscious of it as anything of unusual importance.

Finally, some features appearing frequently in Porter's style are rare in Monteverdi's work. Among these is the little cadence with syncopated middle part, which in major appears thus:



In minor the same formula (with the B lowered) begins with an augmented chord; but Porter likes its effect, for he employs it freely.

\* \* \*

We have yet to compare briefly the work of Porter with that of another well-known pupil of Monteverdi, Heinrich Schütz. Both the younger men completed their studies in Italy; the careers of both were hindered by war—Porter's by the Civil War in England, his German colleague's by the Thirty Years' War in the Empire; both were affected by the work of the monodists in Italy. But Schütz was a bolder innovator as well as a more productive composer than Porter. Whereas Porter seems to have introduced here and there elements in the new style that happened to suit him, Schütz wrote whole works in the new dramatic manner. They resembled each other, however, in retaining a love for the old. Both wrote works in true polyphonic style, works which needed little support from the *continuo* part.

Schütz's lost opera *Dafne* was, as we must suppose, the result of his contact with the works of the early monodists during his first Italian sojourn. When he returned to Italy a second time in 1629, he published in Venice the first part of his *Symphoniae Sacrae*. As Schütz himself wrote, "When I visited my old friends in Venice, I discovered that the musical style had greatly changed, that the old forms had in part been laid aside, and that modern ears were tickled by a new delight. Now I have exerted my strength and wit to bring forth with my poor invention something of this kind."

If we study Schütz's riper employment of this new style, as shown in the second part of the *Symphoniae Sacrae* (1647), we can see most clearly how his way of treating the *italiänische Manier* differed from that of Porter. In both we find a small group of instruments employed in support of the vocal soloists. In both we find this group—a three-part instrumental ensemble consisting of

two violin parts and bass—used to introduce the vocal portions of the works, and to play interludes while the voices rest.

For Porter, however, the introductory movement has little thematic connection with the song that follows, and in the "Toccatos" the introduction may be not only quite independent of the vocal piece that follows but considerably longer. Porter evidently thought chiefly in terms of providing a varied fare in which both violinists and vocalists might find something to their tastes. He does, however, provide occasional ritornellos that echo the closing notes of the preceding phrase and, while the introductory movements have no close thematic connection with the song, there are several that do reflect the mood of the text in a very happy fashion. *Hayle Cloris, hayle*, for instance, is introduced by a brief fanfare-like passage, while the gravity of *Wake sorrow, wake* is reflected in its *sinfonia*. When the voices enter, Porter simply doubles his two soprano parts with the violins. If he wishes to hear the sopranos alone for a time, he writes *Tace*, and the violins are silent.

Schütz, in contrast, often dispenses with an introductory movement, but his treatment of the violins is more independent, and the interludes they play are more closely related to the vocal themes. The violins answer the voice parts in imitation; they play closing sections based on the preceding musical matter. Occasionally they are given florid parts to play, and they introduce runs and trills as in *Herr, nun lassest du deinen Diener in Frieden fahren*. In the twelfth number of the second set of *Symphoniae Sacrae*, Schütz employs even the bow tremolo, recently devised by Monteverdi, and double stops as well. The writing is in marked contrast to Porter's whose violin parts are quieter and in the manner of the viol fantasia rather than of the music-drama.

In the treatment of the voice parts, both composers are striving to master the same idiom. But with what different results! In Schütz one feels the approach of Bach; in Porter the decline towards the pretty vocal trifles of Henry Lawes. It is interesting to note that divisions and florid passages appear only in certain pieces by Porter, while in Schütz they become an integral part of his style, as they later form an important element in Bach's vocal writing.

Schütz attempted both the old technique of the motet and madrigal and the newer dramatic manner. He kept them separate, however, and, indeed, after the *Sacrae Symphoniae* of 1629, he wrote *Musicalia ad Chorum Sacrum* (1648) in the older strict style and with the *continuo* part optional. Porter, on the other hand, tends

to incorporate into the madrigal the new ways of using instruments and the new interest in musical declamation.

If we survey Porter's work once more as a whole, we see him as one of the last to practice the art of madrigal writing, one of the first in England to respond to the new dramatic music. Perhaps he was the first to bring this new style to England, but absolute certainty must await a careful study of such works as those of Martin Peerson, which were also written for voices and instruments.

Walter Porter appears in his introductions as a modest man, a man who could not quite let go of the old, but who nevertheless responded to the new. He wrote several five-part works that will stand comparison with those of the great English writers who preceded him. Such are *Hayle Cloris, hayle*; *Come louers all*; and the elegy *Wake sorrow, wake*. And he could set pretty conceits and lovers' trifles as deftly as Henry Lawes or Webbe.

Should we praise Porter for having taken the path towards opera in England, a path that was to lead to so little of lasting value? *Dido and Aeneas* was, after all, a solitary masterpiece. Such questions lead to little of value. One can only regret that the dramatic tendency was destined to so partial a fulfilment in England. But the influence of a powerful change in musical tastes—such as the swing towards dramatic music undoubtedly was—could not be denied, nor could an alert and progressive musician remain insensitive to it.

# EARLY SPANISH MUSIC FOR LUTE AND KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

By WILLI APEL

## I

**S**PAIN and Music—what impressions do they evoke? One thinks of Bolero and Fandango, hears the click of castanets, recalls the March of the Torero and the song of Carmen. One remembers—what else? A few recent names—significant, no doubt, but deprived of the lasting resonance vouchsafed only to those whose owners possess originality of genius or finished mastery. One seeks in vain for a work rich in pure, serious music transcending the dance and the operatic medley. One searches the past two centuries, but even there one finds nothing to repay one's efforts. In Spain, at the time of Mozart and Beethoven, there flourished the arid pedantry of the academies, and, while Bach was creating his incomparable works, the churches of the peninsula resounded to the trivial tinkling of a music that today strikes us as frivolous.

But there was a period in Spain, long before all this, when music attained to fullest flower, when Spanish musicians took the lead in the development of European music, and decisively influenced its course; when there originated on Spanish soil works that by far excelled, in artistic imaginativeness and solidity of structure, all others fashioned within a wide span of time and space. It is true we must revert to a remote past in order to find them. The music to which we allude is two hundred years older than that of Bach and nearly a hundred years older than that of Frescobaldi and Sweelinck. It belongs to the 16th century, to the culmination of the Renaissance, whose musical significance is regrettably thrown into the shade by the worldwide celebrity of its painters and sculptors.<sup>1</sup>

For Spain, this period represents the zenith of her political power, a height never again attained. We find ourselves back in the reigns of Charles V and Philip II, on whose realm "the sun never set." Nothing much, to be sure, is known concerning notable

<sup>1</sup>Even if the choral works of Palestrina or Orlando di Lasso are now and then performed, the instrumental music of the period is at this writing still a *terra incognita*. The fault lies at the door of the collections of early piano-music, for without exception they halt just as they are about to reach back to the 16th century. They freely disport themselves on the level fields of the Rococo, and content themselves with occasional excursions into the intricacies of the Baroque highlands. But they never set foot upon the interesting domain of the Renaissance at its height.

blossomings of art at the courts of these rulers and their vassals. Neither the history of literature nor that of the graphic arts credits them with any name of distinction. But the void is filled by music. Through it the period of Spain's political ascendancy was enriched artistically, as was the reign of Pope Julius II through architecture, the rule of the Medici through painting, and the court of Ferrara through poetry. Thus—if we leave aside the traditional architecture taken over from the Moors—music was the earliest of the arts to have attained full development of its powers on Spanish ground. If we assume 1550 as the central year of the development, we find literature following a half-century later (with Cervantes, 1547-1633; Lope de Vega, 1567-1635), and painting still fifty years thereafter (with Velasquez, 1599-1660; Murillo, 1617-1682). The picture presented by these three successive peaks is pregnant with meaning, and interest in it should spread beyond the limits of musical circles.

Spanish instrumental music of the 16th century displays a number of surprising similarities to the far better-known English virginal-music that followed shortly after. The Spaniards of today, like the English, are a people whose highest achievement in musical culture lies far behind them, and who, therefore, are ranked by some as unmusical, so far as the term applies to artistic productivity. Hence one can understand the feeling of astonishment and wonder aroused by certain Old-Spanish music and *pari passu* by some Old-English music. Furthermore, each of these cultural growths flourished in immediate connection with a brilliant period of political vigor: in England, during the reign of Elizabeth; in Spain during the reign of Philip II, whose Armada was destroyed by the fleet of Elizabeth. The two epochs correspond, moreover, in the chiefly instrumental character of their music, which contrasts strikingly with the more prominently vocal character of the Italian, German, and French music of the period. True, the Spanish music is not quite as one-sided as the English, but it is none the less evident that the chief interest is centered on solo instruments like the organ, clavichord, and lute. Numerous interesting analogies may be traced also in various details of musical practice, e.g., in the development of variations, or in the preference, among the dance-forms, for the Pavane. And finally, in both art-developments we are amazed by an extremely swift evolution and an equally sudden decline: little more than half a century is required for the full unfolding of the musical faculties and their subsequent exhaustion. It hardly needs stressing that quite possibly a phenomenon of the kind we have

described is a phenomenon only in the sense of "a thing as it appears to be." It may very well be the result of a distortion produced by a perspective obtained from a remote vantage-ground, such as ours at the present time. If the literature of the period were in a better state of preservation, the outlines of the picture would doubtless gain much in their sharpness. However this may be, the impression remains of an extraordinary spontaneity inherent alike in the Spanish and English developments, a spontaneity that displays them both in striking contrast to the much more prolonged and leisurely growth that musical history more generally reveals.

## II

We designate Spanish instrumental music of the 16th century as clavier and lute music. The term "clavier" is to be understood as applying to a whole group of instruments embracing the organ and the forerunners of the modern piano—the clavichord, virginals, harpsichord, etc. The organ or some stringed keyboard-instrument occupied the musical foreground, accordingly as the work performed was sacred or secular, but without either instrument necessarily excluding the other. For the whole group of instruments, the Spaniards had the name *tecla*, i.e., keyboard instrument—a term whose appropriation would serve to fill an annoying gap in our present-day musical terminology. Alongside the works for *tecla* stand the lute compositions. They are considerably greater in number, a fact that should astonish no one who bears in mind the favored position enjoyed by the lute throughout the Renaissance. Perhaps it is not superfluous to state at this point that the modern piano, if properly handled, is a serviceable substitute (if not even more than that) for the lute as well as for the old *tecla*-instruments. Here, as in all similar cases, the "right" instrument matters far less than does the right feeling for style and the right approach to the spirit of the old music.<sup>2</sup>

The available sources are not many. Here is a chronological list which may be helpful for purposes of orientation (L = lute; T = *tecla*):<sup>3</sup>

1535-36: Luys Milan, *Libro de música de vihuela de mano intitulado El Maestro*, L;

<sup>2</sup>We seize this opportunity to warn against certain modern transcriptions, such as the lute pieces that Gino Tagliapietra includes in his *Antología pianística*. But, at the same time, we gladly recommend as a whole this 16-volume collection, the only one that gives a proper picture of clavier music from 1530 to 1930.

<sup>3</sup>Originals of some of these works survive in the libraries at Madrid, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna. (The four works marked with asterisk are in the Library of Congress.—Ed.) A part of their contents has been republished in modern editions. The collected works of Cabezón are to be found in Felipe Pedrell's *Hispania schola musica sacra*, Vol. 3, 4.

- \*1538: Luis de Narvaez, *Los seys libros del Delphin de música*, L;
- 1546: Alonso de Mudarra, *Tres libros de música en cifras para vihuela*, L;
- 1547: Enriquez de Valderrabano, *Libro de música de vihuela, intitulado Silva de Sirenas*, L;
- 1552: Diego Pisador, *Libro de música de vihuela*, L;
- 1554: Miguel de Fuenllana, *Libro de música para vihuela intitulado Orfenica lira*, L;
- \*1549-55: Juan Bermudo, *Declaracion de instrumentos musicales* (a manual containing some musical examples of a pedagogical nature), T;
- 1557: Luys Venegas de Henestrosa, *Libro de cifra nueva para tecla, harpa y vihuela* ("... for Keyboard Instruments, Harp, and Lute"), T, L;
- \*1565: Tomas de Santa Maria, *Libro llamado Arte de tañer fantasia, así para tecla como vihuela* ("The Art of Improvising")—a manual with some musical examples), T, L;
- 1576: Estaban Daza: *Libro de música en cifras para vihuela intitulado el Parnaso*, L;
- \*1578: Antonio de Cabezon, *Obras de música para tecla, arpa y vihuela . . . recopiladas y puestas en cifra par Fernando a Cabezon, su hijo* ("Musical Works for Keyboard Instruments, Harp, and Lute. . . Collected and edited in figures [i.e., tablature] by his son Fernando") T.

The notation of the lute pieces (i.e., Spanish lute-tablature) is very similar to that which was used in Italy. Six staff-lines denote the six strings of the lute, in the tuning G-c-f-a-d'-g', the lowest string being generally represented by the highest line. Figures (0 to 12), written on a staff-line, indicate the fret on which the finger should be placed. Since the frets were so placed as to give a chromatic progression, each figure stands for a corresponding number of half-steps above the tone produced by the open string. Thus, 4 on the second line calls for *c* plus 4 half-tones—in other words, *e*. The time-values are indicated by symbols such as    placed above the staff. Each value indicated con-

7, and 8. The transcription into modern notation is not free from error, but it is adequate. Milan's work is reproduced in the early notation and in Leo Schrade's flawless transcription into modern notation in *Publikationen älterer Musik*, Bd. 2. Count Morphy gave a selection from all the above-named lute-works in his *Les Luthistes espagnols du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*. This is, from the standpoint of the works represented, a highly worthwhile collection, but unfortunately its value is much impaired by a great number of mistakes in the transcription. Tagliapietra has reprinted several of the Morphy transcriptions—without change, unfortunately—in his above-mentioned *Antología*. Books 1 and 2 of the Narvaez work are republished by Edoardo M. Torner in *Colección de vihuelistas españoles del siglo XVI*. Various organ-pieces are to be found in the *Antología de organistas clásicos españoles* of F. Pedrell, and in the *Antología de organistas clásicos españoles* of Villalba; Ritter's *Geschichte des Orgelspiels* contains some pieces by Cabezon. Bermudo and Tomas de Santa Maria have been treated in detail in Kinkeldey's *Orgel und Klavier im 16. Jahrhundert*. Some samples of old Spanish music appear also in the collection *Alteste Klaviermusik* (Schott, Mainz), edited by the author.

tinues to prevail until it is replaced by another. Simultaneously sounded tones with different time-values, such as one encounters continuously in polyphonic music, are as little required by Spanish lute-tablature as by any other lute-notation. Here is an example taken from Valderrabano:

The image contains four musical staves. The first staff is a tablature staff with a C-clef, a common time signature, and a 6-line staff. It features vertical numbers (0, 2, 3, 2, 2, 0) and horizontal strokes indicating fingerings. The second staff is a 'Literal transcription in staff notation' in G major, common time, with two staves: treble and bass. It shows the tablature as it would appear on a lute or keyboard. The third staff is another tablature staff with a C-clef, common time, and a 6-line staff, showing a continuation of the musical line. The fourth staff is a 'Transcription according to the musical sense (approximate)' in B-flat major, common time, with two staves: treble and bass. This transcription attempts to interpret the tablature as if it were a standard musical score for a keyboard instrument.

The Spanish organ-tablature used for tecla-music likewise employs numbers and staff-lines, but with entirely different meanings. The lines correspond to the voices or parts of the composition, and, as a result, vary from 2 to 6 in number, according to the requirements of the part-writing. The figures 1 to 7 indicate, in each voice, the tones of the F major scale from f to e'; higher or lower octaves are called for by adding strokes or dots; chromatic alterations are marked by accidentals. The time-values are made clear by bar-lines and by precise vertical alignment of the parts.<sup>4</sup> Here is an example taken from Cabezon:

<sup>4</sup>It is not necessary to discuss in this article the somewhat different tablature of Bermudo. Particulars may be found in Johannes Wolf's *Handbuch der Notationskunde*.

The chronological order given in our table is misleading in that the most significant Spanish musical work, the *Obras* of Cabezón, first appeared in print twelve years after the death of the master (1510-1566). Historically it would have to be placed between the years 1540 and 1550. In any event, it will be clearly seen that all the works of our period fall within the span of only a few decades. There are, to be sure, some works that were printed later, such as those of Aguilera de Heredia (c. 1600) and Correa de Araujo<sup>5</sup> (1626). But we believe ourselves justified in excluding them as mere imitations of Cabezón produced at a time when the organ style created by him had already become a subject for academic study and emulation. In their work one may already see the tendency towards pedantry and scholastic formalism from which Spanish music was to prove incapable of freeing itself until close to the present day.

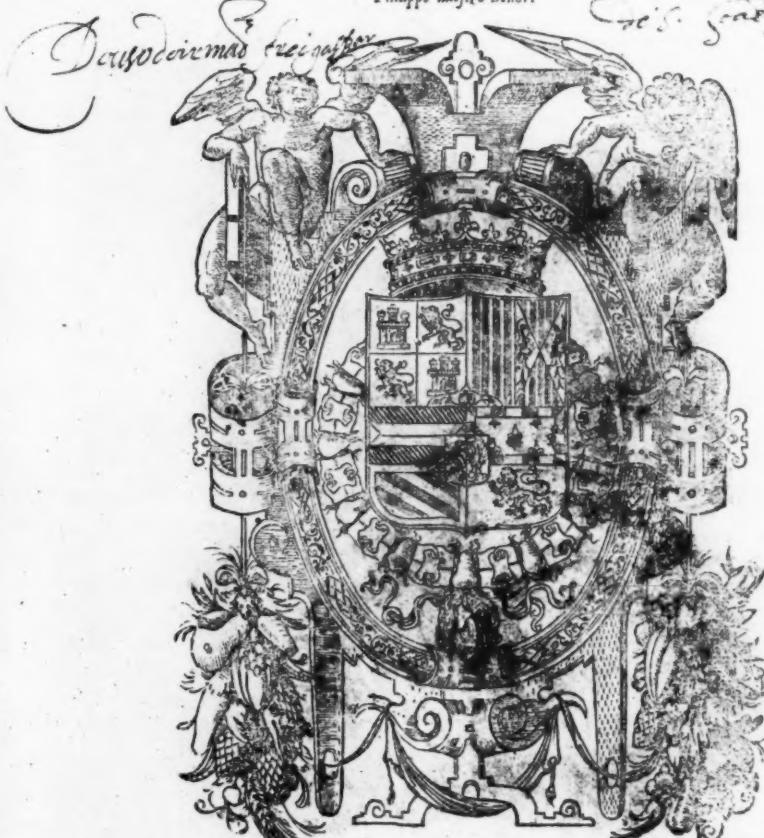
The works of the old creative epoch, however, breathe an entirely different spirit. They reveal originality and life, power and imagination. Indeed, whoever, because of some preconceived idea of the character of the Spanish nation, looks for fiery temperament or extravagant gaiety, will be disappointed. This music is serious and noble, austere and reserved; and it is the more animated, in a deeper sense, as it renounces all external signs of animation. Thus it stands in marked contrast to the English Virginal music. Whereas in the latter a frankly folkish element prevails over the more severe church-music, the old Spanish instrumental art fully continues the traditions of the polyphonic style, which had their origin in a vocal art of which we discover traces as far back as the 12th century. In fact, we find efforts in the same direction, that is, towards an instrumental polyphonic music, in all the musical nations of Europe at the beginning of the 16th century; but, as regards the artistic significance of their creations, none of them can compare with the Spaniards. Neither Arnold Schlick nor Cavazzoni (to name only the best) can vie

<sup>5</sup>Copy in the Library of Congress.—Ed.

OBRAS DE MUSICA  
PARA TECLA AR PAY  
vihuela, de Antonio de Cabeçon, Musico de  
la camara y capilla del Rey Don Phi-  
lippe nuestro Señor.

RECOPIADAS Y PUESTAS EN CIFRA POR HERNANDO  
de Cabeçon su hijo. Ante mesmo Musico de camara y capilla de su Magestad.

DIRIGIDAS A LAS C. R. M. DEL REY DON  
Philippe nuestro Señor.



CON PRIVILEGIO.  
Impresas en Madrid en casa de Francisco Sanchez. Año de M. D. LXXVIII.

Title-Page  
of the *Obras de Musica* of Cabezon (1578)  
(By courtesy of the Library of Congress)

DE ANTONIO DE CABEZON. 9  
Tiple canto llano.

♩ ♪

Versos del primertono.

Contralto. C

Tenor C llano.

Contrabaxo C llano.

with a Cabezon—and the lute compositions of Milan, Fuenllana, and Valderrabano, tower, as indubitable masterworks of style, head and shoulders above the experimental beginnings of the German, French, and Italian lutenists of the same time.

### III

To our picture of Spanish instrumental music, drawn with broad strokes, we shall add a few details, by dealing somewhat more fully with three musicians in particular—Cabezon, Milan, and Valderrabano.

Antonio de Cabezon belongs to the by no means small group of blind musicians of olden times—Landino, Paumann, Schlick, Valente, etc. Details concerning his career may be found in the volumes of the *Hispaniae schola musica sacra* already mentioned. It will suffice here to state that Philip II appointed him court organist at Madrid, where he enjoyed honor and recognition in full measure. Cabezon's works are preserved for us in the *Obras de música* published by his son; certain pieces of his survive also in the volume of Venegas de Henestrosa published in 1557. The mention of the different instruments listed in the title of the *Obras*—“... *tecla arpa y vihuela*”—should not be understood as indicating that the collection contains specific compositions for each. On the contrary, the uniform notation in Spanish organ-tablature and the contrapuntal style common to all the pieces point unequivocally to organ and clavier. Only the simplest of the pieces can be performed, without excessive mutilation, on the lute or the harp. But the optional interchanging of instruments is in full agreement with the artistic customs of the time, or, to express it more simply, with the social habits. For the organ and clavier were reserved for professional musicians, while the great host of dilettantes contented itself with the more easily mastered lute or harp. Thus, musical considerations were much less responsible than extra-musical ones for the admission of an inclusive list of instruments—as was true with the *per ogni sorte di stromenti* of the Italians.

The *Obras* begin with a good-sized section of shorter contrapuntal pieces, which are either freely invented or are written over liturgical melodies. They are labelled, according to their character or origin, as Duos, Trios, Versos, Salmodia (Psalm verses), etc., and are grouped, in sets of from 4 to 8, in accordance with the church modes. With their brevity and proportionate simplicity in mind, and considering also such designations as *Salmodia para principiantes* (“Psalter for Beginners”), musical

scholars like Ritter (in his *Geschichte des Orgelspiels*) and Seiffert (in his *Geschichte der Klaviermusik*) have designated these compositions as instruction and exercise material. But such a characterization, even if historically correct, has disadvantages, since it can all too easily give rise to the mistaken notion that we are here dealing with music of little artistic value, music just good enough for pedagogical purposes.<sup>6</sup> In actual fact, these little compositions are masterpieces of fully mature art—creations that contain within a few measures a combination of such fulness and force of expression as only a Bach knew how to unfold. Here is an example of this highly compact music:



(The dynamics have been added by the author.)

Among the larger works, certain variations, such as the *Diferencias sobre la Pavana italiana* or the *Diferencias sobre la Dama le demanda* ("Variations on 'The Lady Wishes It'") claim first attention. They claim it, from the musical standpoint, because of their wealth of invention, their mastery of form, and a spiritual beauty yielded by consummate clarity and seriousness of purpose. They claim it, from the historical standpoint, because they are—together with similar works by the Spanish lutenists—the earliest examples of the variation form, the only form of the period that has continued its life into the present day. If we hail the Spaniards as the inventors of the variation form, our praise becomes all the greater when we discover that, in musical value, their works excel considerably similar compositions written about 50 years later by John Bull or William Byrd. Sweelinck was the first to reach a height approximating that attained by Cabezón,

<sup>6</sup>We hope not to be misunderstood as implying, as a corollary, that music can be too good for instruction purposes. Quite the contrary: we deeply deplore the current attitude in piano pedagogy, which is all too content with material of inferior quality. But as long as it is so easily satisfied, one is compelled to make remarks such as the above.

whose direct influence, moreover, in matters of style is apparent, as for example in the manipulation of short variation-themes, such as the following:



Even the greatest representatives of the Neapolitan School, such as Majone (fl. 1600) and Trabaci (1603), also show themselves to have been similarly influenced. They prove unquestionably that the Spaniards—who had already been overlords in Italy for a long time, both in politics and in general culture—exerted a decided influence on Italian music also.

Of special interest are a number of compositions by Cabezón which he labels *Tiento*. The word has about the same meaning as the Italian *Toccata*. But the Spanish form nevertheless bears little resemblance to the *Toccata* form of a Gabrieli, Luzzaschi, or Merulo, with its free and often diffuse character, its constant alternation between passage-work and sustained chords. It approaches closer in style to the *Canzone*, which is divided into several sections of elaborate contrapuntal treatment. But, whereas the Italian *Canzoni* were, up to the end of the century, little else than vocal compositions tricked out with *groppetti* and *trilli* of all sorts, the far older *Tientos* of Cabezón display an astonishing wealth of ideas in the idiom of the keyboard. And they display also a loftiness of conception and a logic in construction that raise them high above all works created in the field of free instrumental composition up to the time of Frescobaldi. Most noteworthy in these respects is the *Tiento del primer tono*. After a decidedly arresting exposition and an impressive climax, it leads into a veritable Lutheran choral of noble dignity superimposed over a moving bass. Here is this interesting piece, whose Bach-like texture will cause no less astonishment than its similarity to the choral *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her*:





Nobody who seriously studies the works of Cabezon is likely to feel that our praise of him is exaggerated. To associate Cabezon with Bach, as we have casually done, signifies more than the expression of an unconsidered admiration. It points to an inner relationship that links the Spanish master more closely to the great German than perhaps to any other musician. In any event, I know of no one among the clavier and organ composers of all time who, by reason of musical spirituality, profundity and exalted seriousness of purpose, austerity and sublimity of thought, and—last but not least—complete contrapuntal mastery, more properly belongs in his company.

\* \* \*

The best known representative of Spanish lute-music is Don Luys Milan (ca. 1500-1560), who partook of even greater honors at the court of the viceroy in Valencia than Cabezon enjoyed at Madrid. At Valencia he was not only a member but a pampered

favorite of the court circle; he wrote a literary romance in the gallant style, in which he placed himself in the center of countless adventures and love affairs. He spent some time at the court of Charles V. To picture Luys, in the presence of the omnipotent Emperor, surrounded by Spanish grandees and their ladies, playing on his deep-voiced lute some stately pavane or purling *taner de gala*—that is indeed a captivating vision which today, after 400 years, still springs with vivid sharpness from his creations.

Milan has bequeathed us his musical life-work in his above-mentioned *Libro de música*, to whose title he proudly added the appellation, *El Maestro*, the name under which his age adored him. Forty fantasies constitute its chief contents. He himself distinguished two types among them. The larger group consists of compositions built on sprightly themes, and written in a style of free imitation, as was considered suitable for the lute. For inner warmth and musical life they cannot, we grant, stand alongside the works of Cabezon. The writing is sometimes not altogether devoid of a certain dryness. This, to be sure, has nothing of the pedant about it; it may, rather, answer to the formality of the court atmosphere that surrounded him. Livelier and more appealing are the fantasies designated *taner de gala* (festival music) which, in their interchange of passage-work and harmonic sequences, recall the Toccatas of Merulo, except that they by far surpass the Toccatas in musical charm. Besides songs with lute accompaniment (villancicos, romances, sonetas), the work contains six pavanes in simple harmonic style—certainly the most expressive examples of the species that have reached us from the 16th century. Noteworthy, since quite unusual for the time, is the absence of any churchly influence as well as that of those highly popular transcriptions of vocal compositions by celebrated contemporaries (such as Josquin, Willaert, etc.) which no ordinary lute-composer of the Renaissance was able to resist. Milan probably felt too keenly his own extraordinary superiority to bother with such hack-work.

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Concerning Enriquez de Valderrabano, his personality and life, we know as good as nothing. But of perhaps more weight than dates and figures is the motto that appears at the end of his *Silva de Sirenas*, under a vignette of a symbolical figure laden with fetters: *Ne ingenium volitet, paupertas deprimit ipsum* (Lest the

mind should soar upward, poverty holds it down). How strikingly this contrasts, by implication, with the radiant life of Milan! Yet it would seem that Valderrabano's want of wordly goods was not without compensation. His music is not crushed to earth, but soars from the miseries of earthly existence to spiritual heights. Whoever enters the Woods of the Sirens will hear there strains of such tenderness and loveliness, music charged with such deep feeling, that he will gladly forego for a time a company in stiff ruffs and gaudy brocades.

From the unfortunately small number of Valderrabano's lute compositions,<sup>7</sup> we shall present here only fragments of the "Music for two Lutes," an especially impressive piece which forms the end of his book. The first lute performs a quasi three-part music that moves expressively and flowingly within the harmonies of the G-major cadence; the frequent use of the augmented fourth gives it a sort of supernatural delicacy. The second lute accompanies or plays a counterpoint against this music. It does so by means of a continuous repetition of a simple G-major triad disposed in a stirring figuration that has an almost oriental touch:



The following measures give an idea of the effects produced by the two instruments in combination:

Transcription for piano

<sup>7</sup>The greater part of his book consists of songs and transcriptions of vocal works.

Are we stretching things too far if we see two worlds of music portrayed and united by the pair of lutes—in the first, the verve and sensitiveness of European feeling; in the second, the fanaticism and frenzy of the Orient? Be the answer what it may, this composition—which is bold at the same time that it is modest, and gentle at the same time that it is heroic—suffices, by reason of its musical quality, to ensure both for itself and its creator an unimpeachably valid place high in the music of all peoples and all times. And this, whether the world at large sees fit to recognize Valderrabano and his great contemporaries, or continues to forget them as it has done in the past.

# MODERN CZECHOSLOVAKIAN MUSIC

By HANS HOLLÄNDER

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN music—by this name we designate the peculiar musical style that has developed on the soil of the young Czechoslovakian state from all the various national elements out of which this state itself is formed. Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and the Russo-Carpathian district at the eastern extremity, with all their different cultural shades—among which the German pigment is strongly represented—have given a more or less distinctive color to the new Czechoslovakian music. However, the influence of the Czechs, being the preponderant one in the state, has provided the strongest impulse, especially in music. There it largely absorbs and assimilates the impulses of the other folk-groups; only the German composers might be said to have maintained a certain degree of independence. For this reason, a clear distinction between the Czech, Moravian, or Slovakian styles or schools can hardly be seriously argued. And this is the more obviously true because the minor groups have hitherto brought forward only rather unimportant examples of an autochthonous art-music. In the course of our observations, therefore, the terms “Czechoslovakian” and “Czech” will be employed quite synonymously; the identity of signification naturally applies, above all, to the new music created since the founding of the modern state.

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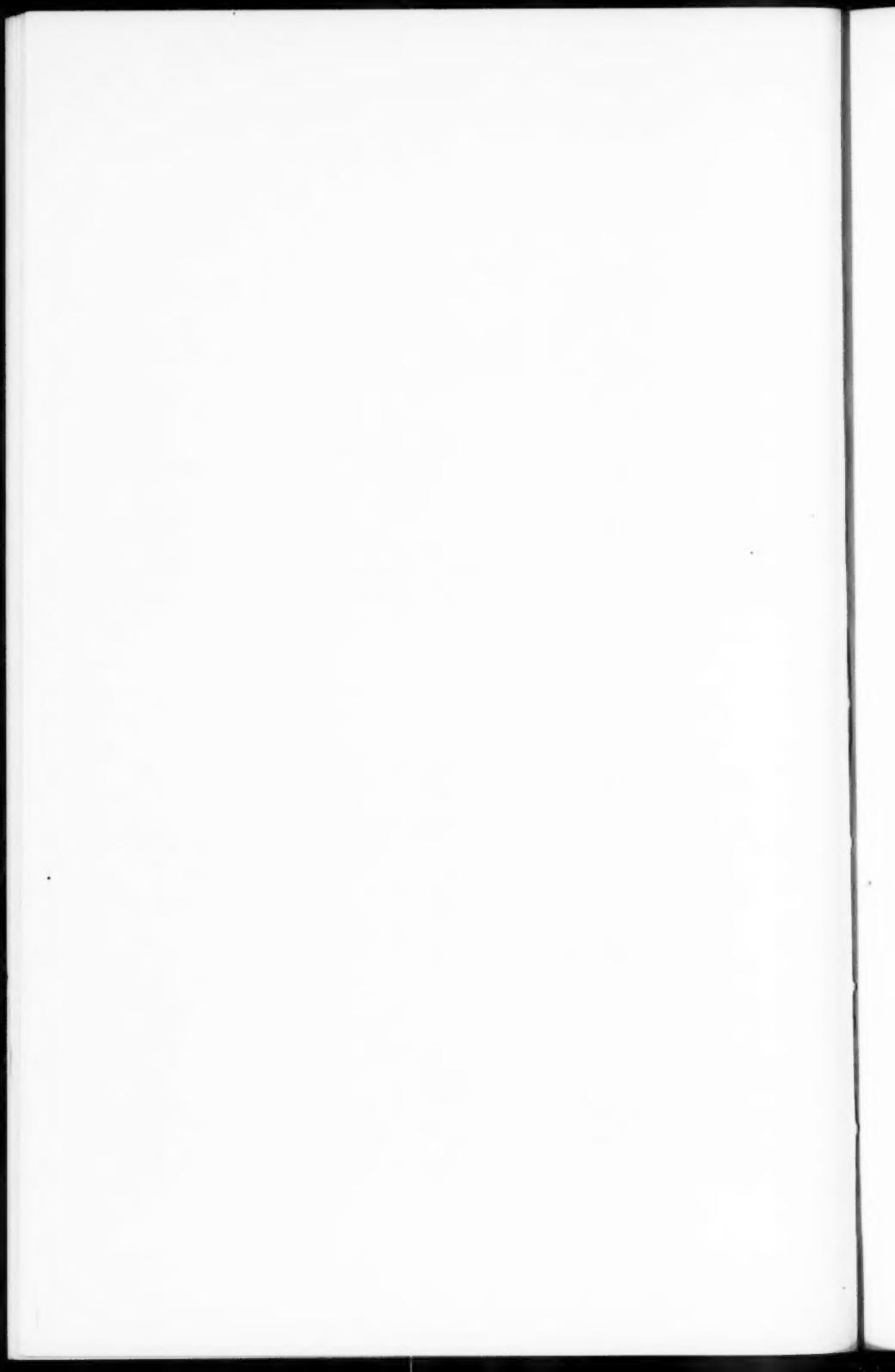
On the threshold of the new era in Czech music, whose dawn nearly coincides with the awakening of the national consciousness of the people, stands the revered figure of Bedřich Smetana (1824-84) in supreme grandeur. Since the epoch of the Hussite brethren, with their eminently national trend in music, and since the era of the Bohemian masters, Stamitz, Richter, and Filtz in Mannheim (whose activities paved the way for the Vienna classicists), the soul of Bohemian music for the first time found a truly congenial and exalted interpreter in the person of Smetana. While holding the creative potentialities of the nation in his sovereign grasp, he entered into the company of the elect in the wider world of art. And yet, during his lifetime, Smetana's position was by no means undisputed. Despite “The Bartered Bride” (*Prodaná Nevěsta*) and his next popular opera, “The Kiss” (*Hubička*), he was accused by his compatriots of following Wagnerian tendencies. The

Leoš Janáček



Vítězslav Novák





charge was made in defiance of the fact that the reprehensible reminiscences of the Wagnerian idiom were to be found in precisely his most fervently patriotic operas, like *Dalibor* and *Libuša*. Nevertheless, his "Bartered Bride" won recognition as the work which, at a stroke, had raised Czech music into the ranks of cosmopolitan art. In its fine classicism it was a most felicitous reflection of the Bohemian folk with all their humor, their characteristic humanity, and their delight in song and dance. Its music, an immanent growth of the folk-spirit, although employing no actual folk-songs, could therefore become, in the best sense of the term, the national melody of the Czechs. This finished and, of its kind, unexcelled composition has become a standard work. Side by side with it, the symphonic poems "Richard III," "Wallenstein's Camp," and "My Country" (*Má Vlast*)—all modelled after the neo-German school—, together with the autobiographical String Quartet in E minor, were to become the models for a whole series of similar descriptive works by younger composers.

Following Smetana in point of time, yet hardly as an artistic inferior, Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904), with his elemental genius, still further deepened and strengthened the world-wide recognition of Czech music. He was less devoted to literature and less closely bound to the neo-German trend than Smetana, but his music, like Smetana's, sprang from the vital ancestral soil of the Slavic temperament. In Dvořák's writing—a product of natural gifts similar to those of Franz Schubert—, the creative versatility of the renowned unspoiled music of Bohemian folk-art makes a most compelling appeal. Dvořák's works include all species of composition from the song and instrumental solo-piece, on through fine chamber-music, up to the oratorio (*St. Ludmilla*, *Stabat mater*), the symphony, and finally the opera. His symphonies—among them the pioneer symphonic elaboration of Negro melodies, the celebrated Fifth ("From the New World"), written in America—and also his chamber-music, are still reckoned, by reason of their splendid melodic sweep, their incisive rhythms, and rich color, among the most potent manifestations of "absolute" music deriving from the turn of the century.

Zdenko Fibich (1850-1900), somewhat softer and mellower in nature, nevertheless belongs also to the epoch of the struggle of Czech music for a genuine national style, and is likewise counted among the founders of modern Czech music. An adherent of the neo-German program, he blended with its descriptive and dramatic means of musical expression (declamation, *Leitmotiv*) his own romantically attuned temperament. This temperament, less

susceptible to the inspiration of folk-music than Smetana's or Dvořák's, renders him akin to Schumann and Liszt. His romanticism, little inspired by national themes, chose from the stores of world-literature. It selected, among other things, Schiller's *Braut von Messina* and, in *Hedy*, the Haidée episode from Byron's "Don Juan." But Fibich's chief domain was not the opera; it was melodrama, wherein he successfully displayed his inclination for program music and tone-painting, as for example in the melodramatic trilogy *Hippodameia*.

Czech musical productivity at the close of the 19th century was seeking for an adjustment between the recently awakened national energies and the stylistic elements of neo-romanticism. In this connection we should note the venerable figure of the Slovakian master, J. L. Bella (b. 1843), a prolific composer of church-music, and the author of an opera written in the Wagnerian manner, "Wayland the Smith." During the search for adjustment, the younger composers—e.g., J. S. Foerster, J. Suk, and V. Novák—found themselves confronted with the newly arisen impressionism, and felt themselves required to take a definite stand for or against it. Its anti-Wagnerian tendency came halfway to meet both them and their artistic sympathies, which were chiefly directed towards Russia and the West. In the opera, they sought for a revivification of national elements, such as had been accomplished by Glinka, Dargomyjsky, and Mussorgsky, and had been realized, after Smetana, in Dvořák's *Rusalka*, with the bewitching glamor of fairy-tale and nature-myth. Meanwhile, the frankly folklorish endeavors of impressionism were furthering the interest in national melody already awakened by Smetana and Dvořák, and now warmly cherished by most of the younger composers. To neither impressionism nor expressionism has Czech music unconditionally surrendered. On the contrary, its strong inherent vitality has been able, by virtue of its own might, to lend these endeavors a new and fruitful impetus. Let us now follow the various threads of the resulting development.

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Belonging in their ideals to the nineteenth century, Josef Suk (b. 1874), most faithful disciple of his master, Dvořák, and J. B. Foerster (b. 1859), the present Nestor of Czech music, have bridged the gap between the newer era and the old. Suk's fresh-flowing style, unhampered by academic inhibitions, finds freest scope in his chamber-music and piano-pieces. These works reveal the intimacy of his voluntary artistic kinship with Dvořák, with

whom, by the way, he entered into actual family ties when he married the master's daughter, Ottile. Even after Suk had turned his attention to program-music (in the symphonic poems "Prague" and "Maturity" [*Zrání*]), this exuberant melodist and reveller in tone-color still faithfully cherished the spiritual legacy of the departed Dvořák, a legacy closely in keeping with the distinctively subjective character of his own artistry. In his most powerful symphonic poem, "Israel," a work all aglow with feeling and steeped in luxuriant colors, he erected an enduring monument to the memory of Dvořák and his wife.

A complete contrast to Suk's colorful luminosity is found in the cautiously softened lyricism of Joseph Bohuslav Foerster. This master spent a great part of his life in Hamburg and Vienna, and probably for that reason his art is invested with that supernatural quality with which its Slavic depth of feeling and mellifluous melody are imbued. Foerster, with his gift of assimilation, essayed every form of composition—songs, chamber-music, symphonies, operas, choruses, oratorios—, and fashioned each with his noble and impressionable artistry. Only a few years ago, in response to the ovations rendered him on his seventieth birthday, he presented the nation with the fine fruit of his ripe age, the oratorio "Saint Wenceslaus." His firm personal faith and warm feeling were blended in this work; they were presented in it in a technically and formally polished objective reflection that appears closely allied to the classical trend in Smetana's art. And they have been similarly blended and presented in his nearly 1000 songs, his five symphonies, and his stage-works.

The strong individuality of Vítězslav Novák (b. 1890), contrasting with Foerster's in having no leaning towards eclecticism, connects the post-romantic period with the aspirations of the youngest generation. Novák, a pupil of Dvořák, began his artistic career in the footsteps of his teacher and in the wake of Johannes Brahms. His lively artistic imagination soon transported him into the realm of impressionism, wherein he holds sway with his brilliant elaborations of native folk-lore. In these works, Slavic musical vitality molds the impressionistic color-material into concise form and a distinctly architectonic construction. A great part of his chamber-music, the "Slovakian Suite," and the symphonic poem "In the Tatra," most clearly exhibit this nationally colored impressionistic structure; whereas in the fine piano-cycle "Pan," the symphony "Eternal Longing," and the symphonic cantata "The Storm," all bearing higher opus numbers, he expands beyond the influence of the native folk-music. Novák has sought to extend his artistic activities not only to impressionism, but to

expressionism and the linear stylistic problems of the present day. We hardly need remark that this eminent composer, in whom the highly gifted musician and fervent nationalist are wonderfully blended, confronts all these tendencies in a spirit of full independence, without the slightest concession to fleeting fashion. His symphonically planned and not invariably dramatic operas ("The Imp of Zvíkov," "The Lantern" [*Lucerna*], "A Night at Karlstein") prepared the path for the two pantomimes *Signorina Gioventù* (1928) and *Nikotina* (1929), works of ripest art and invention, that display sovereign mastery over the latest stylistic innovations (polytonality, polyrhythms). Novák is today the leading exponent of the newer Czech music, a master of truly European mark, with a mind ever open to new and progressive ideas, a leader and a fighter as well.

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Otakar Ostrčil (b. 1879), the present operatic manager of the National Theatre at Prague, has, by dint of a strenuous evolution, shaped himself an individual artistic profile. As a pupil of Fibich he speedily cast off a juvenile tendency towards romanticism, veering in his later style towards the manner of Mahler. His orchestral compositions, such as the C-minor Suite, the Symphonietta, and, above all, the symphonic variations entitled "The Way of the Cross," display Ostrčil as a master of lofty polyphony set out in broad relief; whereas, by way of contrast, in the domain of opera he has produced a delightful hit, "The Bud" (*Poupě*), a light comedy set in the chamber-music style. With his choral works, "The Legend of Saint Zita" and the "Czech Christmas Legend," the composer contributes his share to the imposing Czech choral literature of the last decade.

Among others contributing to this literature are Paul Křížkovský (1820-85)—Augustinian monk and founder of modern Czech choral song—Foerster, Novák, Janáček, Axman, Vycpálek, and others. In this connection should be mentioned also the renowned choral societies of teachers in Moravia and Prague. (The chorus of the latter city toured the United States in 1928-29, and left a deep impression.)

Rudolf Karel (b. 1880), one of the last pupils of Dvořák, represents an austere style, not easily accessible, because of its complicated motive-work. The style is displayed in his symphonic poem, "Demon," as well as in his E♭-minor symphony and his chamber-music.

Besides the universalist Novák, the spirit of Czech music has brought forth another truly eminent artistic personality, the Moravian Leoš Janáček (1854-1928), the man among recent composers whose growth was most strongly rooted in the elementary sphere of Slavic folkways.<sup>1</sup> By virtue of his rare penetrative force, the art-works of this original genius derive from his grasp of the racial folk-spirit an overwhelming impetus and the hot breath of life. To him his native tongue early disclosed the laws inherent in its musical nature; melody and rhythm wedded to words soon became for him, the born dramatist, the point of departure in musical characterization. Thus his endeavors bore a singular likeness to those of the Russians, especially Mussorgsky's. The impetuous temperament that, for the sake of fidelity, does not shrink from asperity; the frequently abrupt realism in style; the short, pregnant motives that only seldom unite in ordered architectural grouping; the often unfinished, extemporaneous character of many compositions—these offer striking points of similarity between the two great Slavic musicians. In these points, the younger by no means merely copied the older, but rather, at a certain period in his development, discovered a spiritual kinship with his senior. Before the opera *Jenufa*,<sup>2</sup> Janáček was an almost unknown composer; with it, he all at once attained to international recognition. Next to Smetana's "Bartered Bride," it has won the greatest success among Czech operas. It presents a drama that combines Nature and Race in a splendid synthesis, a drama that has an unusually artless and moving human experience for a theme, and is set to a music endowed, at one and the same time, with the powerful emotional appeal of the folk-soul and features that are novel and look to the future. Whereas certain of Janáček's earlier chamber-works and piano-pieces still labor under the influence of conventional lyricism (as does the lately rediscovered opera "The Beginning of a Romance" [*Počátek Románu*]), his choruses ("70,000," "The Czech Legions" [*Ceské Legie*], etc.), the Symphonietta, and the more recent chamber-music, display the master's individual style as already realized in the opera *Jenufa*. A final brilliant example of Janáček's robust naturalism is found in that remarkable "futurist" opera, "From a Death House," the libretto of which he himself pieced together out of various passages of dialogue in Dostoyevsky's "Diaries." The final eminence of his instrumental and vocal output, however, was reached in the quite

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the opera-composer Janáček, the author of the present article published an appreciation in the January, 1929, issue of this QUARTERLY.

<sup>2</sup>Performed at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in 1924-25. The original title of the opera was "Her Foster-Daughter" (*Jeji Pastorkynia*).

unchurchly, passionately eruptive "Glagolskaya Mass," a setting of the ancient Slavic text for the celebration of the Eucharist. On the whole, it is probably safe to say that Janáček has again directed modern Czech music—after it had in recent decades more and more assimilated itself to the international idiom—into the channels of the native and racial fundamental-energies.

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A considerable group of young musicians, quickened by Janáček's potent example, has followed his lead. Emil Axman (b. 1887), a learned musician and serious composer (for a time he was a pupil of Novák), has most nearly approached the musical diction of Janáček in his austere choral works, *Medynia Glogovska*, *Rapport*, and "Christmas of the Poor" (*Vánoce Chudých*)—all inspired by the social and ethical decay of the wartimes and their sequel—, his cantatas, symphonies, and instrumental works for soloists. The opera, "The Brothers Karamazov," by another Novák pupil, Otakar Jeremiáš (b. 1892), has earned its share of the applause won beyond the borders of the homeland for recent Czech music, and, by its energetic dramatic grip and thrilling realism, is sustained on the level of the Moravian master himself. In contrast to Jeremiáš, two among Janáček's own pupils, Osvald Chlubna (b. 1893) and V. Ambros (b. 1891), have turned aside to some extent in the direction of a subtle impressionism. (Ambros, however, has not so turned aside in his realistic folk-opera "The Thief of Happiness.") A Janáček pupil whose fiery minstrels are in closer accord with his teacher's style is Jaroslav Kvapil (b. 1892), author of a symphonic cantata, "The Song of Passing Time," two symphonies, and various lesser instrumental works. The strongly characteristic piano-compositions of Václav Kaprál (b. 1889) are likewise rooted in Janáček's soil; whereas the symphonic drama by V. Petrželka (b. 1889), "The Mariner Nicholas," reveals, in an interesting synthesis, elements of impressionism and expressionism, as well as polytonality and polyrhythmics.

Janáček and Novák are, we may say, the opposing poles of modern Czech music. The former, a man of traditional subjectivity, an unalloyed dramatist and realist, an innate Slavic genius; the latter, an ever attentive and receptive listener to the artistic pulsations of his period, and yet at the same time a stout conservator and continuator of the approved traditions which hitherto have safeguarded Czech music from mere one-sidedness. And thus Novák, even more than Janáček, made himself the representative leader of the modern Czech School, more especially because

Janáček's originality often proved a hindrance to systematic labors on his part as a teacher. The circle of Novák's pupils is a very large one, particularly among the no longer quite youthful generation; the youngest musicians worship other ideals.

Among the composers of the last twenty years there are hardly any who have not felt the inspiration of Novák's spirit directly or, at least, indirectly; for just during that period impressionism with a dash of nationalism was in high favor, and constituted a more or less common meeting-ground, offering something to everyone. First of all, we should mention the high-minded musical director of the Czechoslovakian radio service, Karl Boleslav Jirák (b. 1891), an uncommonly fruitful and many-sided composer, the list of whose works includes an opera, "Apollonius of Tyana," two symphonies, an overture to Shakespeare's "As You Like It," much chamber-music, and many songs. Colorful impressions, supplemented by the influence of Mahler and Richard Strauss, have finally blended in Jirák to form an energetic style. Atonal elements are infused into this style in strictly logical course, with an ever manifest artistic inevitability. From the outset a musical historian and pedagogue, Václav Stěpán (b. 1889) represents a special style in nice refinements of harmonic tone-blending; whereas the style of Boleslav Vomáčka (b. 1887; the composer of one violin-sonata, one piano-sonata, songs, and choruses) has a marked expressionistic vein that has led this serious artist and writer on music into near companionship with Schönberg. A prominent place among Novák's personal pupils belongs to Ladislaus Vycpálek (b. 1882), first and foremost a choral composer of great technical ability and compelling power of expression. His chief work is probably the cantata "Of the Last Things of Man" (*O posledních těcech Clavěká*). As a choral composer in close sympathy with the Novák school, we may mention also Jan Kunc, still another Janáček pupil (b. 1882). We should note also the early deceased Jaroslav Jeremíáš (1889-1919), a brother of the opera-composer, and author of a most promising oratorio, *Jan Hus*.

In recent years Jaromír Weinberger (b. 1893), a pupil of Reger, has found wide recognition, especially abroad, with his opera "Schwanda the Bagpipe-player" (*Švanda dudák*).<sup>3</sup> Weinberger, who has followed it with a second popular opera, "The Beloved Voice," makes very free use, in both works, of the native folk-music, which he handles with brilliant technique and sure effect. Oskar Nedbal (b. 1874), who met a tragic end in 1930, is

<sup>3</sup>Performed at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1931, and at Covent Garden in 1934.

best known for his opera, "Polish Blood." His style, based on that of the racial folk-music, was theatrically effective and highly melodious, with no tendency to desert the travelled paths of the familiar folk-imbued *métier*. And the meritorious veteran operadirector of the National Theatre at Brünn, František Neumann (1874-1929), made honorable though hardly lasting contributions to modern Czech opera with his "Love-making" (*Milkováni*), *Beatrice Caracci*, etc.

At bottom even the composers of the strictest modern sect are indebted to unspoiled racial folk-music, however strongly atonality, linearity, polytonality, and polyrhythms may be anchored in recent Czech music, and however much the folk-music itself may be averse to any doctrinal art whatsoever. Thus, the system of quarter-tone and sixth-tone music, which has been carefully reasoned and systematically elaborated by Alois Hába (b. 1893), was originally inspired by Slavic folk-music, with its peculiar interval-progressions and tonal inflections frequently based on Oriental influences. Hába, a pupil of Novák and Schreker, has for some years composed exclusively in the quarter-tone system, and of late has also tried the sixth-tone system. His works include four string-quartets—among them one with quarter-tones and one with sixth-tones—piano-suites, a choral suite, a piano concerto, and most recently the quarter-tone opera, "The Mother," etc. When listening to these works we are unable—despite the greatest precision in intonation on the part of the performers, and despite the greatest accuracy in the sounding of the intervals (both harmonic and melodic)—to convince ourselves of their artistic necessity. Hába's system, which after all finds historical precedents in the "enharmonics" of early Greek music and the interval studies of theorists in the late 16th century, as well as in certain traditions of Gregorian Chant, assuredly signifies a notable enrichment of our modern musical material. But music written according to the quarter-tone and sixth-tone systems will require a goodly measure of education to be properly appreciated by the listening public, especially since such music bears the mark of a pedantic purpose.

The amiable musical individuality of Jaroslav Křička (b. 1882) was formed by German and, more especially, Russian influences. His romantically humorous vein, wherewith a touch of burlesque is often deftly blended, finds expression in his charming "Children's Songs," his musical Fables and Fairy-tales, and best of all in his successful opera "It is Hard to be a Ghost" (a free version of Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost"). The Age of Jazz, to which Křička pays his respects in some dance-numbers in his

opera, has had its effect on the creative activities of certain younger composers also. First of all, we note Erwin Schulhoff (b. 1894), after Křenek and Hindemith one of the first musicians to introduce jazz into serious music. Numerous dance-compositions, two ballets—"The Somnambulists" and *Ogelala*—, and the Don Juan opera "Flames" (recently produced), show the elegant musicianship of a master of the materials of modern technique, with peculiar virtuosity in the handling of rhythms. Similarly adept in rhythmic mastery is the art of Bohuslav Martinů<sup>4</sup> (b. 1890), now residing in Paris. A follower in spirit of Stravinsky, he has attained, through a fusion of racial folk-music elements with jazz, to a musical style lucid in form and of brilliant virtuosity. His football symphony "Half-Time," together with his ballets and operas ("The Three Wishes," "The Soldier and the Dancer," *Jour de Bonté*), are typical of his leaning towards realism combined with a dash of burlesque and irony. One of the most youthful of the group, E. F. Burian (b. 1904), has taken the tone-effects and rhythms of jazz as a starting-point for several eccentric works, such as his Concerto for percussion instruments with piano-accompaniment, and his Jazz Requiem. His "Voice-Band," a choral declamation employing both differentiated and "free tone-effects," has proved extraordinarily telling at several performances. On similar lines, verging towards the grotesque, stands the art of J. Ježek (b. 1906), special composer for the Osvobozené Divadlo (the Liberated Theatre) at Prague.

An interesting group on the forum of recent Czechoslovakian music is formed by the German composers who either dwell in the country or at least grew up there. An imposing series of the most highly gifted among recent musicians, from Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) to Fidelio Finke (b. 1891), with detailed particulars concerning these numerous artists, would far overstep the bounds of the present article. The German musicians of Czechoslovakia, however they may betray the influence of their native land in their psychic and mental attitude, can hardly be reckoned as representative of a fundamentally national Czechoslovakian music; for their creative energies have sought above all to unite with the musical culture of Germany and Austria, and it is from the standpoint of the attempted union that they should be regarded and estimated.

<sup>4</sup>Martinů's String Sextet won the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Prize for 1932.

## NIEROP'S HACKEBORT

By J. MURRAY BARBOUR

*A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Assyrian maid,  
And on her dulcimer she played,  
Singing of Mount Abora.*

—S. T. Coleridge.

THE Dutch word Hackebort, like the German Hackbrett, means literally "chopboard"—the quadrilateral plank used in mincing sausage meat. Its figurative meaning of dulcimer may be due to the similarity of shape, or to the chopping stroke used in playing the dulcimer. The trapezoidal shape distinguished the dulcimer from the contemporary psaltery, which was irregularly hexagonal—the *strumento di porco*. The beating of the dulcimer, moreover, was as characteristic as the plucking of the psaltery. Quite possibly, therefore, resemblances both in stroke and in shape led the Germanic peoples to give this homely nickname to an instrument that has always borne in English the romantic appellation of dulcimer.

The dulcimer is of ancient Oriental lineage. (*It was an Assyrian maid. . . .*) It did not appear in Europe—at least as distinct from the psaltery—until the middle of the twelfth century. By the second half of the fifteenth century, English dulcimers had fifteen or more strings. The seventeenth century found the dulcimer at the height of its popularity in Europe. It experienced a final blaze of glory in the double dulcimer constructed (1690) by Pantaleon Hebenstreit, until the pianoforte eclipsed all of the less robust members of the polychord family.

From the early part of the sixteenth century a further distinguishing mark of the dulcimer has been the bridges. In the simplest type of seventeenth-century dulcimer these consisted of two strips running the entire width of the instrument and cutting all the strings in the same ratio. For greater sonority, several strings—most commonly four—were tuned to a unison as on the piano. These sets of strings (fifteen or twenty in number) were threaded in criss-cross fashion like the lacings of a boot. One series passed over the right-hand bridge and down through holes in the left-hand bridge, while the other series was arranged similarly from the opposite side. The left-hand bridge divided the series of

strings that passed over it in the ratio of 2:3 (thus forming the interval of the fifth), and both sections were playable. The right-hand bridge was near the point of attachment of the string and only the longer section to the left was utilized.

The larger dulcimers had twenty-five or thirty sets of strings, with four or five bridges, varying in length and placed somewhat irregularly. The modern Hungarian or gypsy cimbalom is a dulcimer of this latter sort, having a complete chromatic compass of four octaves from E to e''.

It is a far cry from the cimbalom and dulcimers of similar compass to Nierop's Hackebort. Dyrck Rembrantz van Nierop, a Dutch mathematician and astronomer, published as an appendix to his *Wiskonstige Rekening* (Amsterdam, 1659)<sup>1</sup> a little book bearing the title *Wis-konstige Musyka*, with separate title-page and pagination. Our immediate interest in Nierop's book lies in the account that he gave of a most unusual tuning used for a Hackebort with two bridges and only four single strings. Unlike the usual type of two-bridge dulcimer, however, each string passed over both bridges, and was thus divided into three playable sections, with a total compass of twelve diatonic tones, or an octave and a half.

It is difficult to reconcile Nierop's small and simple instrument with the complex and richly decorated dulcimers of his own time that are still to be seen in our museums. Could he have been describing an actual instrument or was his treatment wholly theoretical and ideal?

Although in 1650 the dulcimer was still a favorite instrument of the nobility, it was also popular in lower ranks of society. A peasant who built a dulcimer for his own use was not likely to be over-particular about its construction: the decorative details were omitted; the quadruple strings gave place to double or single strings and their number decreased; only the trapezoidal shape, the parallelism of the strings, the sloping bridges were reminiscent of the more elaborate type. Since these peasant instruments were so easily constructed from materials at hand, there seems to have been no need to build them substantially. At any rate it is only the sturdy, beautifully ornamented dulcimers of the nobility that have survived the shocks of centuries.

There is nothing, however, to prevent a theoretical writer from conferring a sort of specious immortality upon an instrument whose physical existence lasted but the span of a butterfly. Such

<sup>1</sup>This is the 2nd edition of a work first published in 1650. There are also editions of 1673 and 1680.

an instrument was the Hackbrett of Othmar Luscinius (1536), with six strings and a single bridge; the so-called Psalterium of Marin Mersenne (1635), with thirteen double-strings and no bridges, was really a dulcimer of the simplest possible type; and Nierop's Hackebort, with its twelve-tone compass, definitely belongs to the same class, for Nierop himself called it "a crude and rustic instrument" ("een bot en boersch speeltuygh").

In general the scale of the smaller dulcimers, including that of some of the museum pieces, was diatonic. They had the peculiarity, however, resulting from the division of strings by the left-hand bridge as previously mentioned, that somewhere in their compass there was an F $\sharp$ , say, as well as an F. For example, with any ordinary tuning, the scale of an instrument strung like Nierop's Hackebort would have been C D E F G A B C D E F $\sharp$  G. (The ordinary tuning might have been Pythagorean, mean-tone, or equal. It was definitely not just intonation, although Mersenne's bridgeless Psalterium was thus tuned.)

Nierop interests us chiefly because he did not use an "ordinary" tuning. He stated, on the contrary, that the octave of the Hackebort comprises *seven equal tones* ("seven evenwijdige zangh-toonen"). It is an absurd tuning, he declared—"against the nature of musical art" ("tegen de nature der Zanghkonst"), since seven tones cannot be sung in succession. In reply to many requests, Nierop proceeded to derive "arithmetical measurements" needed for placing the bridges correctly upon the Hackebort. These measurements were based upon the principle that, since the ratio of the octave is 2:1, the ratio of each equal tone will be  $2^{\frac{1}{7}}$ :1 or 10000:9057. The foundation for the entire process was a table of logarithms, by means of which any value could be computed with reasonable accuracy and the minimum of effort.

Although Nierop computed the proportional lengths of the four strings and of the three sections of each string (sufficient data for placing the bridges), he did not state the string-lengths for all of the twelve tones as on a monochord. However, in the complete table of tones and lengths all tones in the octave except III and VII have been taken directly from Nierop, and he could readily have filled these gaps had he so desired.

*Monochord for Nierop's Tuning*

Tones	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Lengths	10000	9057	8203	7429	6729	6094	5519	5000
Tones	IX	X	XI	XII				
Lengths	4528	4102	3715	3364				

In the entire history of European tuning, both in theory and practice, this Hackebort tuning of Nierop stands unique. Nowhere else is there the slightest reference to an octave divided into seven equal parts. In fact, since our theory of the scale is predicated upon harmonic considerations, such a division would be wholly incomprehensible.

To us who are accustomed to an octave of six equal tones, the tones of Nierop's Hackebort would be  $1/7$  tone flat. The fourths and fifths would not be far wrong, but the thirds and sixths would have "neutral" values about midway between our major and minor thirds and sixths. It is not surprising, therefore, that Nierop rejected this Hackebort scale as "against the nature of musical art."

But, however alien this equal heptatonic scale may be to our music, it has become widely known within the past half-century as the Siamese scale. In 1885, the famous essay by Alexander J. Ellis "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations" was printed in the "Journal of the Society of Arts." In the original article (March 27) Ellis discussed Siamese tuning rather cautiously and inconclusively. But in an Appendix (October 30) he stated that he had learned, since the original article was printed, from members of the Siamese band then in London, that in Siam it was the practice to divide the octave into seven equal tones.

Although it is not definitely known how ancient this Siamese tuning is, de la Loubère<sup>2</sup> (1691) may have been referring to it in his somewhat enigmatic account of the *kong* (a bell chime): "It seems to me that the compass of that instrument was only an octave and a half; but certainly it had no semitones. . . ." (*Il me semble que cet instrument n'avoit qu'une quinte redoublée d'étendue: mais certainement il n'y avoit aucun demy-tons. . . .*) Such a description might have been applied without change to the compass and scale of Nierop's Hackebort.

But it is unnecessary to seek a recondite origin for the Hackebort tuning. The explanation may lie in Nierop's appended wood-cut. Although drawings cannot be reproduced accurately on wood, certain features of the Hackebort diagram are apparent without dependence upon exact measurements. The four strings form parallel horizontal lines which are equally spaced. The two side-pieces and the two bridges form non-parallel vertical lines, which, if extended, would apparently all meet in a point—as, according to tuning theory, they should. The bridge GC is perpendicular to the strings, but this fact is without especial significance.

<sup>2</sup>*Du Royaume de Siam*, I. Paris, 1691, p. 261.

As a result of the equal spacing of the parallel strings, the lengths of the strings will be in arithmetical progression, if their diameters and tensions are equal. Then, if we assume that tones I and IV form the interval of a fourth, with the exact ratio 4:3, the ratios for the lowest tetrachord (tones I, II, III, IV) will be 12:11:10:9. Although these are not the ratios for a series of equal tones, the intervals are equal in a purely visual sense, for they would be marked off as equal distances on a monochord. In fact, Ptolemy, adhering to this false, arithmetical conception of equality in musical intervals, had called this very tuning the "hemiolon" or "equal diatonic."

The largest interval in the tetrachord, 10/9, is a minor tone, a comma smaller than the 9/8 tone of the Pythagorean tuning. The smallest interval, 12/11, is a three-quarter tone, and 11/10 lies somewhere between these two values. To the ear, none of these graduated intervals is so much smaller than the others that it would be called a semitone.

A Dutch peasant, ignorant of the subtler distinctions of music theory, might refer to the pitches of the "hemiolon" tetrachord as equal tones, quite as readily as Ptolemy had done, and hence might say that the octave formed by two such tetrachords comprised seven "even-wide" tones. And a mathematician like Nierop might as readily take the loosely used "even-wide" in a strict mathematical sense.

Furthermore, if the bridges divide each string into two perfect fifths, in the ratio of 9:6:4, the string-lengths for the entire Hackebort, expressed in least integers, would be as follows:

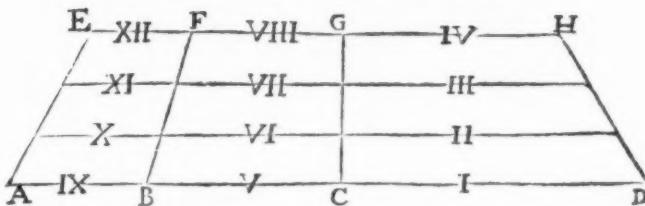
XII 36	VIII 54	IV 81
XI 40	VII 60	III 90
X 44	VI 66	II 99
IX 48	V 72	I 108

Observe that tones IX, X, and XI do not form perfect octaves with tones II, III, and IV. The II-IX octave is fully a quarter-tone sharp; the IV-XI octave is only a comma sharp—but sharp enough to be badly out of tune. Quite possibly Nierop's recognition of these three bad octaves led him to reject any rule-of-thumb method of placing the bridges, intending to set them rather "in their right place, so that whenever the strings are stretched over them the octaves can be struck at once" ("op haer rechte plaatse/dat wanneer de snaeren daer over gespannen waren/de octaven terstont getreft konden worden"). If the fifths formed on a single string are flattened somewhat, as in mean-tone tuning

## DERDE HOOFTSTUCK.

Om een Hackebort te maken en te stellen.

**E**n Hackebort welch hier te lande gemeenlyck  
ghemacckt wort als dese figuer uytwijst/ ende  
wort gestelt op seven evenwijdige zaughtoonen



in een octaef. of halve snaers lenckte / alwaer dat de  
hammen C. G en B F als dan na geset / en de snaeren  
na gespannen wozden/ 't welch dooz 't gehooz niet son-  
der groote moeyten gedaen konde wozden: Ende al ist  
dat het is een hot en boersch speeltuygh / tegen de na-  
ture der Zaughkonst (die op geen seven evenwijdige  
zaughtoonen ghesongen wort) is my nochtans dicht-  
wils booz gekomen om te stellen / waer dooz dat ick  
genootsaeckt worde om een ander middel te soeken /  
alsoo darmen dooz ick onstige maete de hammen kostie  
setten op haer rechte plaatse / dat wanneer de snaeren  
daer over gespannen waren / de octaven terstont ge-  
treft konden wozden.

Om dit te bekomen / soo moet ghesocht wozden een  
sevende Reden van een octaef. of halve snaers lenck-  
te / 't welch ghebonden wort dooz het trekken van de  
wozel van sevenen/ ofte Radics bi. Sursolidum wyt  
500000 tot de eerste letter / en tot de vindingh van  
yder volghende letter seven nullen by ghedaen / men  
vint 9057: Dat is wanneer de lenckte van de eerste

d 3

Maer

The First Page of Nierop's Account of the Hackebort,  
Showing His Diagram

From the *Wiskonstige Rekening*, Amsterdam, 1659  
(By courtesy of the Library of Congress)



or equal temperament, the octave discrepancies will be reduced, but the only method by which all the octaves can be in tune is to use Nierop's scale of seven equal tones.

Since no account, however, has been taken of possible variations in tension upon the different strings, there is a serious fallacy in this hypothetical attitude of the Dutch peasant towards the Hackebort tuning. This is a matter of which Nierop himself took cognizance in connection with the ratio of strings I and IV. "The shortest string," he said, "is a little shorter than 3 to 4; but it need not be made so exact, for slackening or tightening of the strings can help" ("de kortste snaer een weynigh korter als drie teghen vier: doch dit en behoeft men hier soo effen niet na te maecken/om dat men dit door stijver of slapper optrekken der snaeren kan halpen").

Suppose, then, that the bridges are in position and the lowest string is tuned to a suitable pitch. The only feasible way to bring the other strings to the same tension as the first would have been to transfer all the string-lengths to a monochord and then to tune the strings of the Hackebort in unison with monochord pitches. But Nierop said nothing about the use of a monochord in connection with this tuning.

The obvious way to tune the second string is not to attempt to make it as tense as the first string, but to increase its tension so that tone II forms a pure octave to tone IX upon the first string. Likewise tone III and tone X must form a pure octave, and tones I and VIII. Such a tuning of the strings would be dependent only upon the slope of the bridges and not at all upon the arithmetical ratios of the strings. The scale would contain the F and F $\sharp$  previously referred to, and the other octaves would be pure.

The above method of tuning, the most natural to use, differs in no wise from the ordinary dulcimer tuning. Nierop, well aware of the effect of differences in tension, could hardly have failed to note that the pseudo-equality of string-lengths in arithmetical progression would vanish as soon as the Hackebort was tuned. It must be admitted, therefore, that this certainty of unequal tensions in practice renders somewhat doubtful our hypothesis of the "hemiolon" tuning, although this hypothesis remains the most reasonable explanation for the seven equal tones.

A more romantic field of speculation concerning the Hackebort scale lies in Siam itself. We have already seen that a certain Siamese instrument had the same compass and possibly even the same tuning as Nierop's Hackebort. Carl Stumpf,<sup>3</sup> in his authori-

<sup>3</sup>"Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen," in *Beiträge zur Akustik und Musikwissenschaft*, 3. Heft, 1901, p. 72.

tative monograph on Siamese music, traced decided resemblances between the Siamese instruments and those of Europe. The Strohfiedel and Gigelyra, formerly popular in Germany and still played in the more remote sections of Austria, are very similar to the *ranat* (the modern Siamese xylophone, with a compass of eighteen or twenty-one tones).

"Furthermore," declared Stumpf, "our piano has evolved from a 'Hackbrett,' which was struck with two hammers like the *ranat*, although strings were substituted for the wooden strips." In fact if the Hackebort was named from the chopping stroke instead of from its trapezoidal shape, both the *ranat* and the *kong* might properly be called Hackeborte, for the word contains in itself no indication of the type of sounding medium, whether wire, wood, or metal.

It is possible, also, to link Nierop with Siam, albeit somewhat loosely. As an astronomer he was interested in navigation, and wrote a book on trade routes that was used by navigators to the East Indies. He edited the journal of Abel Janszoon Tasman (1603-1659), that most distinguished of Dutch navigators in Pacific waters, who, in addition to his many discoveries of new lands, "in 1647 commanded a trading fleet to Siam."

But, even if Nierop had gone with Tasman on this voyage, he could not have learned in Siam how to tune Dutch dulcimers. It must be remembered that he explained his method, not as an exotic scale, but as a type of tuning actually used by the peasantry.

There still remains the surmise that the tuning reached Holland by sea directly from Siam. This is not simply the idle guess of last resort. Holland was unquestionably the European country most likely to be influenced by Siamese culture during the seventeenth century. As early as 1602, the Dutch had a factory at Patani in Siam. At the time when Nierop was writing, the Dutch had had intimate trade relations with Siam for half a century. It is quite possible that Dutch traders and sailors in Siam had brought *kongs* and *ranats*—these Oriental Hackeborte—back with them to Holland. But there we reach an impasse, for we cannot conceive why the exotic tuning-principle should have been transferred to the indigenous type of Hackebort with wire strings, in spite of its resemblance to the *ranat*.

This latter line of investigation having proved less productive even than the former, it may be well now to recapitulate briefly the points of our argument: Nierop believed that in the tuning of the Hackebort the octave was divided into seven equal parts or tones. A spontaneous origin of this tuning method on the part of

Dutch peasants is highly improbable, since the method has never been used elsewhere in Europe. The wood-cut diagram of the Hackebort suggests the "hemiolon" tuning, without semitones, but with only pseudo-equal tones. But the practical method of tuning the Hackebort strings by octaves militates against this theory. Contact between Holland and Siam was close, and the modern Siamese tuning may have been in use during the seventeenth century. But it is unreasonable to suppose a transfer of the Siamese tuning-principle to a Dutch instrument in common use.

Surely we have here no convincing argument, no clear case. Some day it may be possible to give the correct explanation of the Hackebort scale. However the puzzling gaps may be filled by later evidence, Nierop's position will hardly be assailed. For, although the origin of this tuning system is at present a mystery, the fact remains that in 1650 a Dutch astronomer described correctly, and in apparent good faith, a tuning method that was not to be heard of again in Europe for over two hundred years.

## HINDUSTANI RAGAS

By ROBINDRA LAL ROY

**I**N recent years Hindustani music has received some intelligent attention from the educated community of India. Before, the art had been left in the hands of uneducated performers who were more looked down upon than was their music by the intellectually idle aristocracy. Yet these performers preserved and developed their art even during the chaotic state of the Indian Empire towards the end of the Mogul reign and after. When Europeans, and especially Englishmen, became aware of the existence of the native fine-arts, they naturally interpreted them in their own way, and wrote interesting volumes on their discoveries. Music was not totally ignored, and we find today a number of books on Indian music—both Carnatic and Hindustani. These books have formed the chief foundation of modern Western criticism and opinion on Indian music. In North India, or Hindustan proper, the artists, being wholly ignorant of English, could not explain their own point of view, which, indeed, it was probably considered unnecessary to know. Some European critics did turn to certain native writers. But the books they finally produced, offer, on the whole, a meaningless interpretation. They contain no very intelligent comparison of Indian with European music; they do contain much liberal translation of authentic books—translation showing no understanding of the aesthetic principles involved. Such criticism has almost permanently prejudiced the musical world against Hindustani music, with the result that the subject is granted no more than archaeological importance. But Hindustani music is not always disliked by Western peoples; those Indian musicians who have undertaken tours in Europe and America give encouraging reports.

The main difficulty, perhaps, is that to Western ears this music at first sounds primitive, and offers no explanation of its technique in terms of modern scientific ideas. Now the critics, whose systematically trained scientific minds at once reduced this unfamiliar music to its elements, favored the part of it that had something in common with European music—a part which they at once recognized—and declared the rest to be unimportant, unnecessary, ornamental, and even worthless. Not one of them appears to have had any practical training in the art. In order

to criticize an art, especially such an exclusively practical and yet abstract art as Hindustani music, at least some practical training is absolutely essential. But the critics in question did not consider it necessary, since Hindustani music was only "one-part" music. And they printed much of it in notation that could not have been recognized even by the persons whose performances it was supposed to represent.

It has been commonly believed that Hindustani music is in the same stage of evolution as Greek music was in the third century. "The first period represents the phase in which the beauty to be obtained from the material is perceived only as consisting in certain arrangements of simple sounds; the aim of the artist is single, and its outcome is the coherent individual utterance, or Melody. This was the music of the old Greeks and is still the music of all eastern people."<sup>1</sup> "Turning now to the earlier developments of the ethnological family from which we ourselves have sprung—namely the Aryans—we find in the Sanscrit literature traces of a distinct musical system in India some three thousand years old . . . which is still cultivated there."<sup>2</sup> These as well as other opinions show a tendency to suppose that this music remains in a primitive stage of evolution—is, indeed, almost dead. But why should the sister arts—painting, sculpture, architecture, etc.—have a glorious history, and not music? In ancient India, music was held in great respect, a respect which it lost only through the puritanism of Aurangzeb. Later it was again ardently patronized: other emperors had a powerful influence upon it. And Hindustani music has had an evolution, as is shown by its not being the same now as it was two centuries, or even half a century, ago.

Our European critics have judged *our* art from *their* point of view—the point of view of tonality and harmony, in which our art made no development. They have declared with great confidence that the Hindustani *ragas* are nothing but melodies with certain "ornamental" differences here and there. They have been unable to realize that there may be a line of musical evolution other than that of polyphonic and harmonic development.



Before we trace this line of evolution, let us consider what the Westerner has missed in our music. Not only has he ap-

<sup>1</sup>H. F. Wooldridge in the *Oxford History of Music*, Vol. I, p. 1 (in both the First and Second Editions).

<sup>2</sup>Dr. William Pole in *Philosophy of Music*, Sixth Ed., p. 89.

parently never used continuous transition<sup>3</sup> between two tones himself; he has failed to perceive its use by others. Helmholtz said: "The first fact which we meet with in the music of *all nations*, *so far as is yet known*, is that alterations of pitch in melodies take place by intervals, and not by continuous transitions."<sup>4</sup> This is a generalization from such facts as were available when his *On the Sensations of Tone* appeared (1862), and seemed to apply to Hindustani music because of the way in which it had been written down. But Helmholtz, though he paid attention to the musical scales used in India, never knew—and Occidentals appear not to know even now, despite much listening to our artists—that continuous transitions have been developed to such an extent that they form the very foundation of our music today. Their development has created a line of evolution distinct from that of Western music, and has a totally different scientific and æsthetic significance, as we shall see. The transition-element in our music has been missed because of our symbolic notation, which means so much more than meets the eye. I shall try, by means of simple graphs, to demonstrate how much more it implies than it expresses.

It is first necessary, then, to understand the significance of continuous transition, the various possibilities in the continuous linking of tones—possibilities which do not involve the use of notes outside the chromatic scale,<sup>5</sup> as will be clear from our graphs—in short, to learn to execute *ragas*, either with the voice or on an instrument.

It is well known that the Hindustani system of music is based on a number of *ragas*, but what a *raga* is no Occidentals have yet been able to explain. They call it, basing the notion on the Western conception of melody, a melody plus certain ornamentations. But to explain one style of an art in terms of its points of similarity with another style of the same art is essentially false. It willy-nilly omits all that is distinctive, and reveals only what is common to both. Even Mr. Coomaraswamy's explanation of a *raga* as a "melody-mould" or "ground-plan" is erroneous. Mr. Fox Strangways has evolved a definition of *ragas* from a number of Bengali songs (many of them Dr. Tagore's). Being a Bengalee myself, I can assert with emphasis that Bengali songs, on account

<sup>3</sup>Continuous transition = sliding from one pitch to another so that intervening fractions of tones are sounded even when the pitches are only a tone or semitone apart.

<sup>4</sup>In the *Sensations of Tone*, Chapter XIV, 3rd paragraph. (The italics are mine.)

<sup>5</sup>This statement is not inconsistent with the definition given in foot-note 3. It is in going from and to tones, which are themselves within the chromatic scale, that the continuous transitions are made.

of the predominance of consonants and short vowels in the Bengali language, completely destroy the significance of a raga. The songs have an emotional and sentimental quality which suit the language, but do not adhere to the spirit of the raga, using only bits, as it were, of the skeleton. A raga, in the modern Hindustani conception, is an aesthetic structure, a combination of continuous transitions and musical curves obeying certain laws in the use of the tones constituting these transitions and curves, and *has no relation to either musical time (rhythm) or words.*

A musical curve may be defined as a system, or an aesthetic combination, that consists of continuous transitions, and shows the space-value of music. The idea is not entirely new to the Western mind. Helmholtz conceived space-values of music and the spatial movement of sound, though he did not know of the aesthetic existence of continuous curves in music. Dr. William Pole appears to have been a little puzzled by the supposed universal dislike for musical curves in continuous transitions. He wrote:

Why is it necessary to proceed by steps and forbidden to progress by continuous transitions? . . . It may be objected that continuous curved lines in design addressed to the eye not only produce a pleasing effect but are usually considered more beautiful than angular transitions of form; and by this analogy the continuous progression of sound might be supposed to be more pleasing to the ear than abrupt change. . . . But Helmholtz has an ingenious answer to this. He says that the eye which contemplates curves can take in and compare all parts at once or can at least turn backwards and forwards, so as to get a comprehensive idea of the whole. But the individual parts of a melody reach the ear in succession and we can not observe backwards and forwards at pleasure.<sup>6</sup>

This explanation by Helmholtz is erroneous because, first, it depends on an analogy between static curves of design or architecture and dynamic curves of music, an analogy which obviously does not hold; secondly, the argument that the observation of curves requires a movement of the eye or ear ("backwards and forwards") is not acceptable.<sup>7</sup> This is true only with static curves, as in architecture. But even in visual sensation, no movement of the eye to and fro is required for the perception of dynamic curves as described, for example by a shooting star or by fireworks. In music also we have to deal with dynamic curves, and the ear, at least in musical Hindustani, finds no great difficulty in perceiving even the details of a musical curve. Dr. Pole's vehement condem-

<sup>6</sup>Op. cit., pp. 73-74.

<sup>7</sup>It is remarkable that Helmholtz assumes the "succession of parts of a melody" even in his analogy with static curves.

nation of singers and violinists who make too frequent or ill considered use of the *portamento* shows that European artists also indulge in tonal curves, though by doing it they may at times offend good taste (according to European standards). But these curves are only an ornamentation in European music, or have supposedly mere emotional significance, whereas in Hindustani music they are the foundation of the æsthetic structure.

Most critics identify a raga with a scale. This is like identifying architectural style and design with a ground-plan. But just as æsthetic appreciation of architecture should depend on the finished product, so the appreciation of a raga should depend upon the æsthetic value of the finished structure. Hence the appreciation of a raga involves a psychological synthesis of musical sensations.

Musical curves are combinations of notes in a certain definite order involving continuity and a particular arrangement with reference to direction and, *within limits*, duration. These are, as it were, the molecules of a raga. The scientific analogy is rather helpful. In molecules we find atoms arranged in a particular way, and the system depends on this particular way in which the atoms are linked. In a raga, the characteristic must be sought in the combinations or systems of tones which form the fundamental æsthetic units, and which, if further broken up, would destroy the æsthetic properties of the raga they constitute, just as separation of the atoms of a molecule would destroy the molecule. To declare that a raga is made up of notes is as correct as to say that steel is made up of atoms of iron, carbon, manganese, sulphur, phosphorus, etc. These statements are not erroneous in themselves, but are meaningless when a discussion of structure, properties, and distinctive characteristics is beyond the understanding of the analyst. The smallest æsthetic units of harmonic music are the individual chords. If these are further resolved into individual tones, and harmony is declared to be nothing but the simultaneous production of a number of tones, what idea of harmony would the statement carry?

Musical curves, then, are the fundamental units that are combined to make up the raga. The æsthetic adjustment of these curves gives the *rupa* of the raga. The conception of the complete raga necessarily depends upon the psychological summation of these curves, i.e., the final æsthetic conception is the sum of many impressions formed by a whole series of musical movements in curves.

The Sanskrit writers describe a raga as fulfilling at least three elementary requirements:

- (1) it should be a combination of tones (*Swaras* as they are called in Sanskrit);
- (2) it should have a combination of *Varnas*, or movements, which are of four kinds, i.e.,
  - (a) *Varnas* employing repetition of the same pitch (*sthayee*),
  - (b) *Varnas* employing ascents (*arohi*),
  - (c) *Varnas* employing descents (*avarohi*),
  - (d) *Varnas* employing a combination of ascents and descents (*sanchari*);
- (3) it should be "pleasing."

In connection with the second requirement, it should be borne in mind that *Varnas* are repetitions of *the same note*, but with raised pitch, lowered pitch, and a combined raising and lowering of pitch resulting in to-and-fro or oscillatory movements. Our European critics gave no special attention to *Varnas*, believing them to be the same as the musical curves combining the different tones of the raga. *Varnas* relate to the method of passing from one tone to another, and these movements are the space-values of music, the time-value being left out of consideration in this discussion.

The third requirement shows the dependence of the art on artistic and cultured criticism.

The idea of continuous transitions is neither original nor arbitrary. We must remember that the idea of musical curves is always present in the mind of the Indian artist while he sings in the Hindustani style. Observation shows that the singer describes with his hand apparently fantastic curves in space, by raising the hand with the rise of pitch and lowering it with the lowering of pitch. Sometimes, to avoid bad mannerisms, he makes forward and backward movements instead of upward and downward movements, but in any case the gestures underscore the movement of sound in the proper *direction*. This should at once show the difference between the European and Hindustani systems of musical expression, the former a system of time-values or rhythm, the latter a system of space-values or movements in musical space.

This does not mean, however, that the space- and time-values of music are fundamentally different. The difference lies in the perception of the tones produced. When a tone is sounded there is a physiological sensation which stops if the tone stops and changes when the tone changes. When the tone stops and is then

reproduced, the same sensation recurs; also if some other tone is reproduced there is the recurrence of not the same but a similar sensation. When tones are so produced and stopped that the recurrence agrees with the expectation we have of it, the sensation is that of time-value or rhythm. Here all the tones, though different from each other in pitch, have one property in common: that of sound coming into and going out of existence. Thus the mind is engaged in finding out first the general law of succession of tones, and not of their relatively different sensations, that being less obvious. But when a tone is changing *continuously* the sensation is different. It changes gradually, and the listener's attention is arrested by his curiosity to know how far it will change and in what direction. In the case of succession, the tones appear as sources of energy having different entities, as there is no perceptible acceleration which develops one tone apart from another, the only perception being that of the regularity of occurrence. In the case of continuous change, the acceleration has no break and is always perceptible. The continuous change gives us the conception that the same musical tone is moving from place to place or varying in pitch, as related to a fundamental tone or given point of reference. Therefore the tones are not perceived as different entities, but the sensation is that of a single tone moving, leaving the impression of the path traversed. This is analogous to the perception of ordinary space and time, where continuous changes of sensation produce sensations of space-values, while discontinuous changes give us the idea of recurrence and rhythm. Thus in its ragas Hindustani music has essentially developed the aesthetic appeal of spatial movements. Rhythm is developed sometimes separately from, and sometimes together with, raga development. Its combination with raga development produces a very difficult procedure involving sensations of both space- and time-values of music.

\* \* \*

I have attempted to show in the following figures (p. 328) a number of musical curves used in our music as aesthetic units. One point requires special attention: the significant aesthetic units generally lie in those transitions which are at least three semitones apart. A transition which has as its limits tones that are two semitones (i.e., one tone) apart cannot have much variety except in duration of the tones and local oscillations, a duration which finally dictates the merging of the two semitones into one of them.

While it is extremely difficult to explain what the distinctive form of a raga is, it is possible to find out a small number of aesthetic units that exercise a predominant psychological influence.

Let us first consider a few kinds of continuous transitions between two tones three semitones apart. The graphs show eight types; these are, of course, not exhaustive. (It would be impossible, in view of the enormous number of significant aesthetic units, to give all of them in a short article.) They represent only certain common types, selected at random to show the existence of such units as contain musical tones standing in characteristic relations.

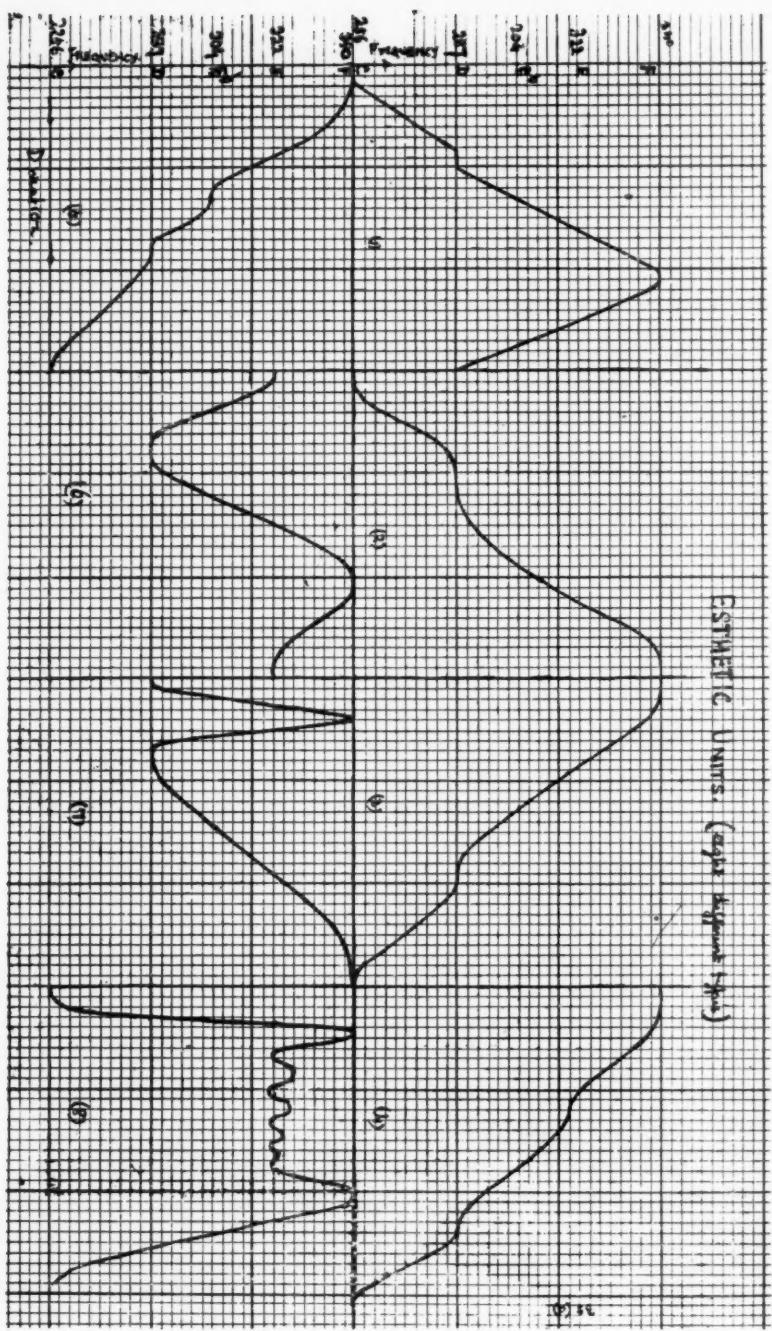
The tonic or fundamental tone of reference is C with vibration 256 (let us say), arbitrarily selected, the selection of a tonic in Hindustani music being totally dependent upon the taste and convenience of the artist. The ratios, of course, would be the same whatever the tonic. The links between D, E, and F are shown by our transition graph, the corresponding frequencies being given in the margin. Here we have:

- C = Tonic; vibration = 256
- D = Major Second; vibration = 287
- E = Minor Third; vibration = 304
- E = Major Third; vibration = 322
- F = Fourth; vibration = 340

In the raga quoted, however, I have considered intervals in semitones instead of actual frequencies against time.

In the graphs, the horizontal direction represents time, but this time has no connection with musical time or rhythm. A raga has a significant form without the conception of musical time or rhythm and shows an aesthetic correlation only of musical curves or aesthetic units. The consideration of rhythm comes in when particular moments in time are accentuated. The relation of the curves as aesthetic units is preserved when the raga is sung with rhythm-accompaniment. Thus when a classical song is sung in the Hindustani style, change of frequency has a double reference to time, or one reference to space and another to time. First, the aesthetic relationship of curves must be preserved; second, the rhythm should be correct. It is obvious that the correct singing of a raga with rhythm is extremely difficult. This however is a complicated consideration and is beyond the scope of the present article.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Readers of this article will be interested in "A Study in East Indian Rhythm" by Sarat Lahiri and Winthrop Sargeant in *THE MUSICAL QUARTERLY*, October, 1931, pp. 427-439.



We start our transitions from C and then come to our second point of reference, D, which temporarily forms the point of reference for all transitions ending in D. This has been done also to show that the tonic is not the only point of reference, and this can be changed from note to note, each note being itself finally referred to the fundamental tonic C. The first of these curves shows the simplest and most inartistic transition, the angular and straight. In the second curve, the change of frequency in the region of the limiting notes is slower. The third type shows a similar transition in the descending direction. The fourth shows the major third E in continuous transition. The fifth is a similar transition which shows the minor third E $\flat$  in the process. Though these last two transitions are very similar, the notes D and F have a different significance in each, and the whole patterns play entirely different notes in ragas. The sixth type shows a circular transition in the order E D F E, "circular" because it starts and finishes on the same note and is described by the artist by a circle in space. "Circularity" is a chief characteristic of some ragas.

The seventh type is of very great importance. Without it our music would lose its essential significance. It depends on the delicate touching of a tone before finally proceeding to it or to another tone. While the transition here proceeds from D to F, a slight touching of F is necessary before the final achievement. This is the most common type of transition. Europeans call it a "grace-note." The term "grace-note" suggests an unnecessary embellishment and implies dependence on personal taste and conventional appreciation. But it is not possible to say what is necessary and what is unnecessary to a particular style of music. Mr. Fox Strangways<sup>9</sup> says that "In absence of harmony, grace-notes are used to emphasize one moment against another," implying something in the nature of a harmonic addition. But this whole interpretation is based on an incorrect point of view. The grace-note is a very necessary note which influences the space-value and not the time-value. It has no definite duration but a place in the *directional character* of the transition. It prevents straight angular transitions which are inadmissible to our music.

The eighth transitional curve shows the local oscillation of tones, in this case of the diminished fourth, and is a characteristic of many ragas. It should not be supposed that the pitch here would not be accurate. The Indian musical ear is very sensitive to inaccurate use of pitches. It is remarkable that the diminished

<sup>9</sup>In his article on "Indian Music" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

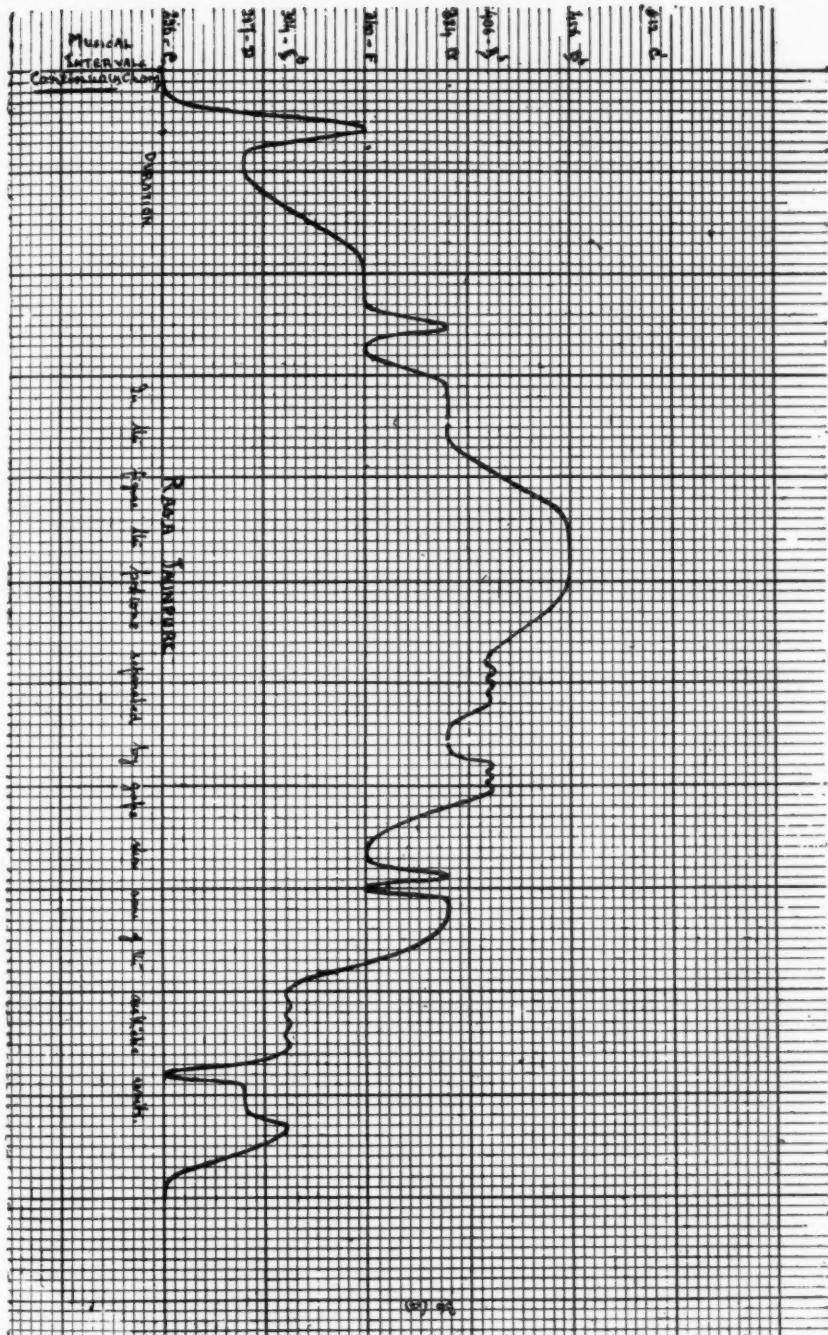
and minor tones are more generally used as oscillation-centres; this is probably due to the slight change of pitch-value with respect to different reference-points.

Now these curves wrongly supposed to be ornamentations, and superfluous at that, do not carry the idea of actual sensations of musical curves, though they are accurately represented with respect to clock-time duration. They show only a time-order of events in one direction: that of futurity. In space-sensation, the directions are at least both backwards and forwards, and the correct representation of the curve E D F E (unit 6 in the first graph) would be a dynamic circle or ellipse in terms of space-values. These figures, of course, would not include quality values.

The next graph is that of a raga called Jaunpuri as it is sung at present. The oscillations and relative proportions of the slopes are characteristic of the raga. This, however, does not mean that the artist must always follow these same relationships; they represent only a part of one of the possible distinctive forms, and are adjustable within wide but aesthetic limits. This is the point which has not been perceived by our European critics. They have substituted time-values for space-values and naturally have fixed the relationship of notes with reference to duration. The notes occur just as an arrangement of events in space occurs, an arrangement in which measurement in either direction is equally legitimate.

The sensation of these curves is not the same as that of static curves. All such sensations depend upon the impression left by the movement of sound in musical space, just as we perceive the path traversed by a moving body in space from the psychological impression left by it. For instance, when a bird describes circles in the sky, the impression of the circle lies in our perception. The complete idea of a raga depends upon the psychological synthesis of such impressions, which observe a time-order or a space-order of events according to the manner in which they are perceived.

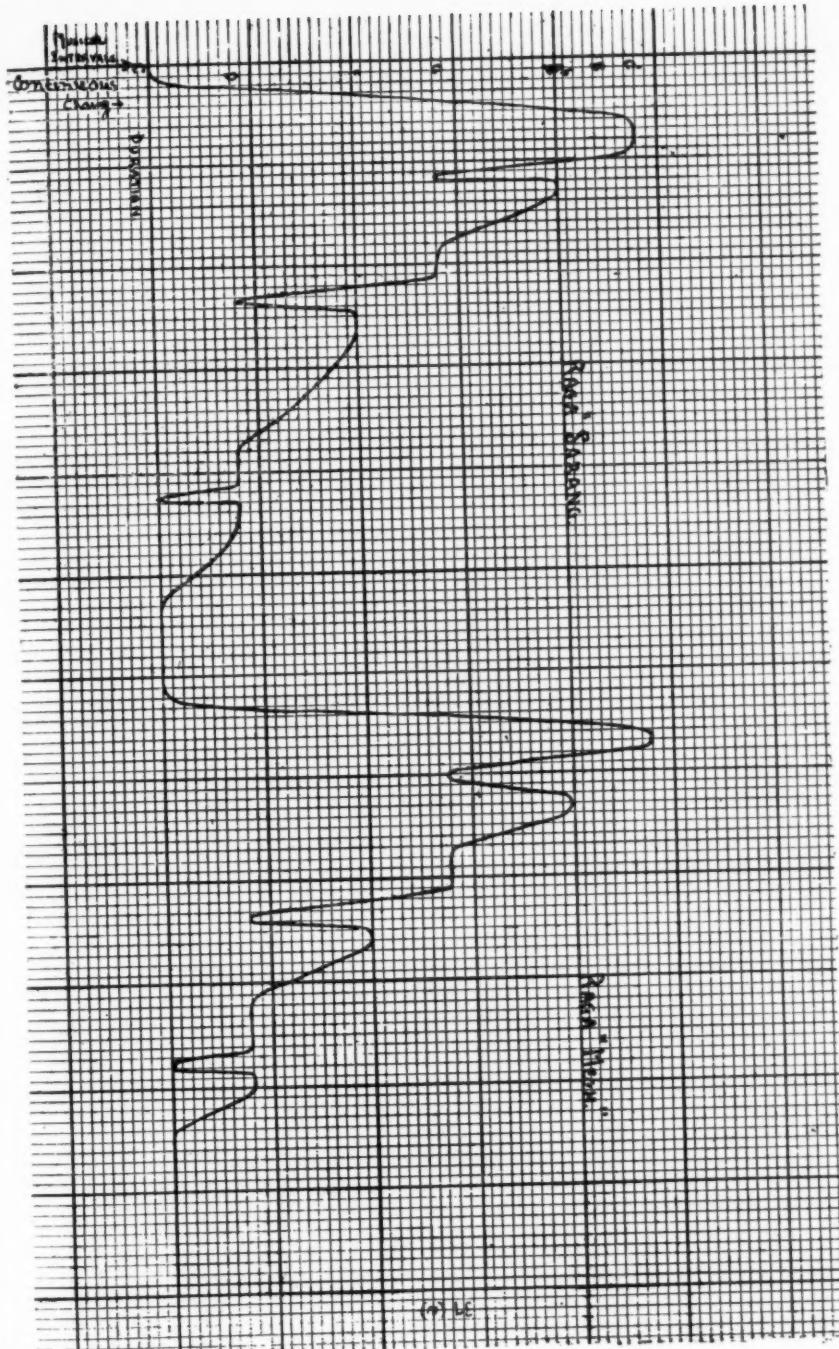
There is another important factor in our music: that of quality and loudness. The voice is by far the best instrument for the expression of Hindustani music, and the influence of quality on the nature of a raga has great importance. Our critics have discussed "ornaments," such as *gamaks*, *ash*, *andolan*, etc., some of which have effects essentially of quality; and vowel-adjustments are absolutely necessary in the use of such "ornaments." The *gamak* for instance is an explosive sound made by sudden release of pressure and correspondingly rapid but continuous change of frequency. When it is used, the cavity of the mouth has a different



shape, and the explosion is made often with the help of the consonant "h" (with "a") in its full strength. Our artists say that a sound like that of the gamak is made by suddenly immersing an empty pitcher (full of air, of course) in water. This sound is characteristic of many ragas.

Such so-called ornamentation does not form a part of any and every raga but is a characteristic of certain ragas to which a distinctive form is given *only by this means*. I show opposite, in part, two such ragas, called "Sarang" and "Megh," which use the same notes. The former has a gradual slope, and the quality and loudness is uniform. In the raga "Megh," emphasis and increase of loudness in certain regions is shown by greater breadth of the lines.

It is not possible to discuss in a single article all the characteristics of ragas—such as *badis*, *sambadis*, *amsa*, rhythm, cross-rhythm, etc., but I hope I have said enough to show that, for a proper appreciation of our music, European critics, who have so far approached it on the basis of tonality and successive sounds, should first abandon thinking of notes in time-values and think of them in space-values. Hindustani ragas appear in their true aesthetic meaning when sung without rhythmic sensation. The history of the unbroken evolution of Indian music is beginning to receive the attention it deserves from the cultured community of India, and we may indeed be hopeful that the real significance of the art will be understood in no far distant future by West as well as East.



## PETER CORNELIUS

By EDGAR ISTEL

**A** TRUE son of the legendary Germany of yesterday whose decline the elder generation of today experienced, the writer-musician Peter Cornelius was a poet and thinker of the old line—a poet in words and tones, a thinker who could express well-formed opinions on every problem of his art. To give a concentrated impression of his lovable personality, bubbling over with inimitable humor, I quote, at random, from his delightful essay "At the New Year":<sup>1</sup>

We should like to wish ourselves a Janus head with a pessimistic and an optimistic nose, so that in our smelling-out and tracing of the artistic conditions at the New Year we might be just to both sides, to those who see everything as black, and to those to whom everything appears rosy. But to take things optimistically is a natural limitation of ours; readily we even beat our breast a little and admit that this limitation prevents our ever attaining to full, flawless Schopenhauerism, though we approach the great sage with a World of good Will and a modest capacity for Idea. As to our understanding of the World and its Will, we find more digestible and instructive that jovial scrap of truth we first heard in a hilarious hour from the lips of Liszt—*Mundus vult schundus*.

The world wants trash! Of late our pessimistic resentment found concentrated expression in this pithy, humorous saying; seeing how plentifully this trash was being offered, how joyfully it was being received, our friends grew uneasy. But posterity, that delightful invention, revived our optimism at once, freeing us like a cool evening breeze from the oppressive realism of our age. We regaled ourselves with the intellectual shadow-play of that eternally irreverent and sinful age, threatened by the outstretched, avenging arm of posterity; we watched with keen interest the strenuous activity of the many who live for the present and the dignified behavior of the few who look to the future.

Cornelius's masterpiece, the delightful *Barber of Bagdad*, was a "barber to posterity," as the libretto has it, "misunderstood by the present, celebrated by the future." And that future in which the self-effacing Cornelius believed has crowned him with laurel, raising him a monument more lasting than bronze in the collected edition of his literary and musical works.

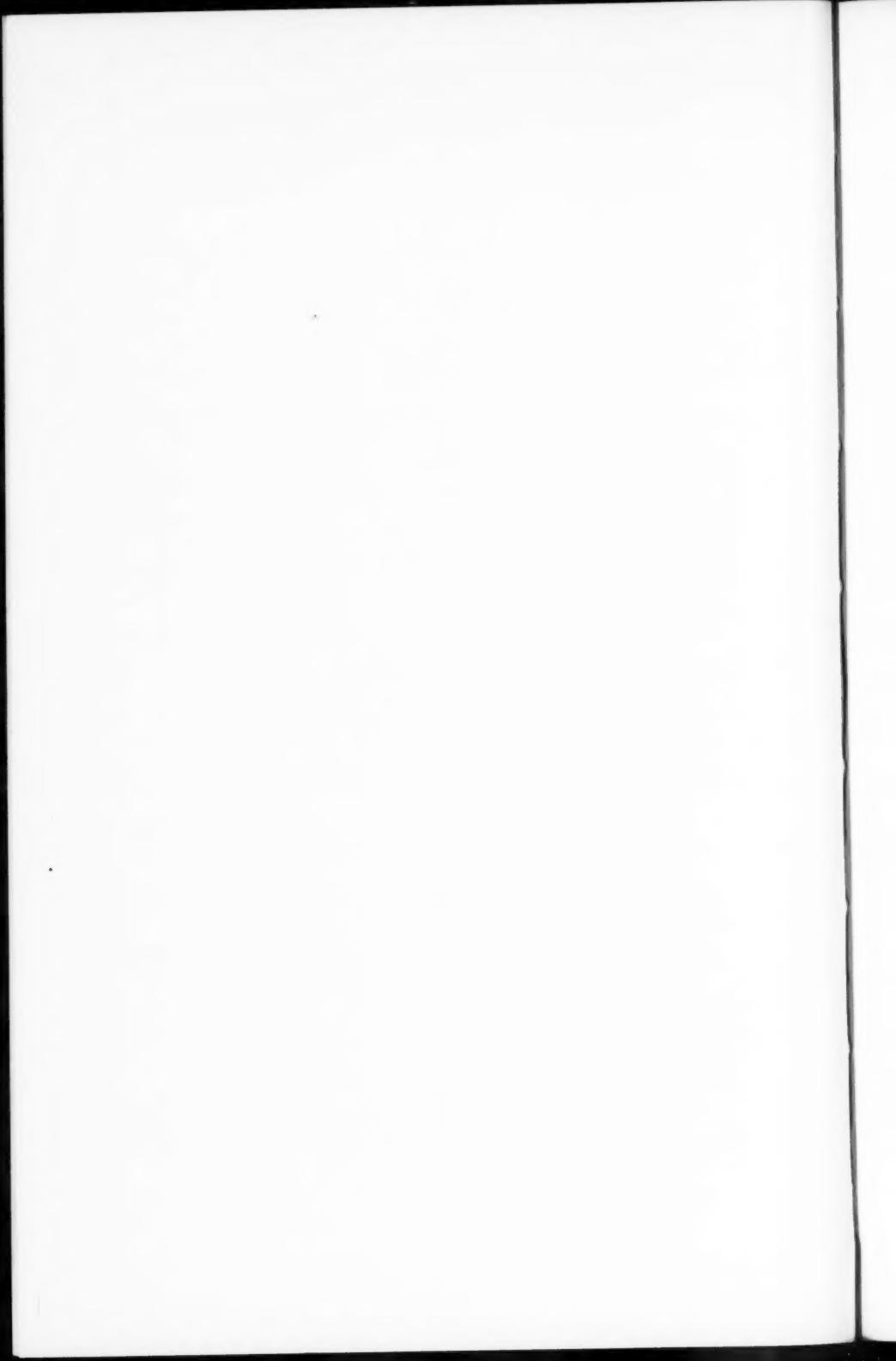
Cornelius was not the tremendous, overpowering artist that Wagner was, fired with a stupendous idea, setting forth in the heat of proselytism against a host of opponents and, having conquered, marching on in triumph, a spiritual hero. Cornelius was not a brilliant virtuoso and versatile man of the world like Liszt, whose exploits won the admiration of his contemporaries. Monu-

<sup>1</sup>*Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. by Edgar Istel (Leipzig, 1904-05).



Peter Cornelius

(After a drawing by Friedrich Preller, Sr., ca. 1856)



mentality and brilliance are foreign to him: depth of feeling, intimacy, cordiality, simplicity, and purity—these are the characteristics of his personality and his art. He worked on a small scale, but on that small scale he was great. Other great ones we admire; Cornelius is assured of our love.

The private country into which Cornelius conducts us is a fairyland far removed from all the noisy activity of our hurrying world, a fairyland in bud and in blossom where there is singing and blissful exultation in the lovely meadows. Gaily colored flowers bow their fragrant heads to fragile butterflies, nightingales warble invitingly in a grove nearby, and the poet, lying beside a spring that murmurs softly, distributes precious gifts to the listening guests from his ample store of treasures. A wave of his magic wand and Bagdad's minarets appear as *Fata Morgana*. "Allah is great and Mohammed his prophet!" the Muezzins sing; the faithful gather for prayer while the lover steals silently to the loved one who waits for him in the secret rendezvous. Another wave of the magic wand and Bagdad's towers shine no longer. A wild battle-cry reaches our ears; Moors in flight whirl by on noble steeds while, from a thousand throats, the shout of "Hail Cid Compeador!" resounds with a tremendous ring over the Castilian plains. Still another wave of the magic wand and we find ourselves on the fertile banks of the Rhine, in golden Mainz, the poet's birthplace; his rapturous verses are in praise of Wine, Woman, and Song, the admirable trinity of Rhenish life.

"Handsome, well-built, intelligent, good-natured, often ingenuous in reply, full of happy thoughts"—this early characterization of the citizens of Mainz<sup>2</sup> suggests Cornelius, a true son of that joyous and active city, the birthplace of the printer's art. Here it was that he came into the world, on December 24, 1824. Both parents were connected with the theatre; the father, despite his straightened circumstances, made efforts to provide a decent education for his children. But his small means permitted only seven years of schooling for little Peter, who said later, with exaggerated modesty, that he had "picked up crumbs of culture while others feasted."

Word and tone—these were the two poles about which the boy's life revolved. But in the beginning was the word. Indeed he owed to poetry the most vivid impression of his childhood—Goethe. Goethe's lyrics became his constant companions. "I recited them aloud out of doors; I sang them at the piano, picking out accompanying harmonies as best I could. One moment decided my

<sup>2</sup>In a letter written on July 14, 1780, before the French Revolution, by the poet and music-critic Wilhelm Heinse.

whole life, and a boy's ardent worship of a great poet became a youth's, then a man's."

Obedient to his father's wish, Peter planned on a theatrical career, but on recovering from the nervous attack that followed his débüt at the Court Theatre in Wiesbaden he decided to abandon all hope of appearing again as an actor and to devote himself wholly to music, returning to the theatre as a composer of comic opera. Instinctively he had singled out the field to which he was to contribute his masterpiece.

On his father's early death Peter was adopted by an uncle—the painter Peter von Cornelius—who in 1844 enabled him to come to Berlin to continue his theoretical studies under Dehn. During these student years Cornelius thought of himself as "absolute" musician; the poetry that had inspired him as a boy was now in the background. But the unexpected happened: deeply affected by a passionate love-affair, he turned, not to music, but to poetry as a medium for the expression of his young sorrows. Then an intimate friend, the poet Paul Heyse, suggested studies in the Romance languages, and Peter's translations from Old French, Provençal, Italian, and Spanish gave him the flair for form that proved so useful to him later in his literary and musical work.

The revolution of 1848 found Cornelius on the side of the republic and of intellectual freedom and brought him into conflict with his ultra-conservative family. Berlin had nothing more to offer. He wanted liberty—artistic and personal liberty, liberty to express his rich inner-self in imaginative art-works, free of the fetters of school-made technic. Wagner's flaming star began to appear on the horizon: he had found a first champion in Liszt, a first home for his art in Weimar. The quarrel over the much-discussed master grew more and more violent; Cornelius's desire to become acquainted with his operas at first hand grew stronger and stronger. "I wanted to hear Wagner's works in order to judge them for myself. I also wanted to apply to Liszt, a man and artist superior to petty animosities, for a candid opinion of my studies."

Weimar, home of the muses, still retained much of the magic that had attracted Goethe's satellites a century earlier; from the banks of the dreamy Ilm, where the poet's summer-house stands silently secluded, there came again a summons to the unwordly cult of art. Liszt, weary of his public successes, had made his home nearby and, with Princess Wittgenstein at his side, was the center of a throng of devoted disciples.

As the author of a friendly article on Liszt's book on Chopin, Cornelius was cordially received. His visit began with an artistic

experience almost revolutionary in its effect on him. For the first time he heard the music of Berlioz: in the morning the "Carnival" Overture at the piano with Hans von Bülow, in the evening *Benvenuto Cellini* at the theatre. Sitting by Liszt's side, he was privileged to listen to his incomparable playing. Cornelius determined at once "to begin all over again, to study his art, and, if possible, to join sooner or later with this circle."

"A poetic blend of words and music was the aim I held resolutely in view." On October 12, 1855, Cornelius reported to Liszt that he had finished the first draft of his *Barber of Bagdad* the day before. Soon the single act of this first version had grown to two. "If I succeed at all, I shall be the first to follow boldly in Wagner's path. But I have a freer, more piquant, more humorous type of melody in mind, and in the whole make-up of my libretto lean more toward the temperamental Berlioz."

Cornelius borrowed the material for his marvellous opera from the Arabian Nights. But how much he makes of the tale told there of the young lover's adventure with the talkative barber! On the literary side alone it is masterly in diction and atmosphere, a true picture of the colorful Orient, shot through with delicious humor. Such a text is no longer a mere "libretto."

The musical side of the work Liszt found no less attractive, and in 1858 he promised to give it a hearing before the end of the year. The first performance was set for December 15. Cornelius, delighted with the prospect of hearing his opera so soon, was scarcely aware of the storm clouds that were gathering. For Dingelstedt, the Weimar *Intendant*, weary of the all-powerful Liszt, was looking for an opportunity to make the theatre distasteful to him. Everyone knew that Liszt was wrapped up in the success of the *Barber*, Young Weimar's first manifesto. The first-born was to be strangled at birth.

"An opposition unparalleled in Weimar's annals—a paid opposition, well-organized and strategically planted—offset the applause with obstinate hissing from the first," Cornelius reports. "At the final curtain there was a ten-minute uproar. The Grand Duke applauded through it all; the hissing continued." Liszt returned to the conductor's desk to applaud, supported by his entire orchestra. Still the hissing continued, even when Cornelius himself appeared on the stage, brought on by the applauding prima donna, Frau von Milde. As a result of this offensive demonstration Liszt announced that he would never enter the theatre again.

Cornelius accepted his misfortune like a man. He did not live to see the triumphant revival of his masterpiece, which rose

like the phoenix from the ashes. For in Felix Mottl the opera found an enthusiastic prophet, never tired of performing this, his favorite work.

Mottl is incidentally the author of a revised version of the score, one in which it gains decidedly in dramatic effect though touched up in Wagnerian colors, the new instrumentation, while brilliant, being altogether too Wagnerian. Compared with Mottl's score, the original, as edited by Max Hasse, seems somewhat colorless.

The *Barber of Bagdad* is nevertheless a work sparkling with wit, humor, and life, original from the first note to the last. In its emotional intimacy, in its melodic budding and flowering, it haunts us like the sweet fragrance of roses from Schira's garden.

\* \* \*

Cornelius was the first to tread Wagner's path without losing sight of his own course. Others who came under the great magician's spell were constantly threatened with the loss of their artistic individuality, a danger Cornelius clearly recognized. The struggle with the artist Wagner, fought out at the expense of the man he loved so dearly, became the great tragic conflict in his life. And in the end Cornelius succumbed to the magician after all, though he retains credit for having anticipated Wagner by ten years in applying to comic opera the dramatic principles then practically illustrated only in *Lohengrin* and Wagner's earlier works. The *Barber of Bagdad* represents a skilful compromise between historic, traditional form in opera and Wagner's requirements. In illustration I need mention only the marvellous canonic finale of the *Barber*, Act II, with its Wagnerian counterpart, the great fugue in the second act of the *Mastersingers*. Because of the unique position of the *Mastersingers*, the later development of German comic-opera had to take the *Barber*, rather than Wagner's work, as prototype.

Yet in his second opera, the *Cid*, Cornelius himself leaned even more heavily on the Wagner of *Lohengrin*. Both libretto and score were written in Vienna, where work was interrupted on August 14, 1861, by Wagner's arrival. The *Tristan* rehearsals began, Cornelius taking an active part. When things went badly, Wagner decided on a visit to Paris, where he planned to write the libretto of the *Mastersingers*. "Wagner has strengthened me miraculously," Cornelius writes to Tausig. "I have complete confidence in myself and am proud that we are on familiar terms (*auf Du und Du*), a privilege Wagner granted me himself in his first

letter from Paris." Then, late in January, came another letter from Paris, a splendid testimony to friendship between artists.

Peter! Listen! On Wednesday, February 5, in the evening, I shall read the *Mastersingers* at Schott's in Mainz. You have no idea of what it means—what it means to me and what it will mean to my friends. You simply must be present that evening! Get Standhartner to advance you, in my name, the money you will need for the journey. In Mainz I shall repay this at once and give you what you require for the return trip. The thing is settled! I have often thrown away money to worse purpose. This time I shall take real pleasure in it. Do not spare yourself! It will be a memorable evening, believe me, and will make you forget everything. You are coming, then! If you don't, you are just an ordinary fellow, though perhaps a good fellow, and I shall call you *Sie* again!

Addio! Your Richard.

Cornelius came—in mid-winter. Afterwards Wagner wrote: "Your whole visit was really quite like a fairy-tale. How it all went off! My good angel came—and left—with you."

On his return to Vienna Cornelius finished the *Cid*. It is, as he says himself, "the one opera since *Lohengrin* that, following its example, offers a sound, healthy synthesis of poetry and music, seeking to depict, without hocus-pocus, ballet, or elves, the struggle between two lovers and the world and its order, keeping always within the bounds of possibility (or, as Wagner has it, clinging still to the old operatic pattern)—in short, a talent's respectable accomplishment in a field opened up by a genius."

It is unfortunate that the third act of the noble work should be so much less effective dramatically than the first two. In vain Wagner endeavored to show his friend where the mistake lay and even suggested an ingenious change which Cornelius was unwilling to adopt. On May 31, 1864, Wagner writes from Starnberg: "I was very desirous—I tell you so frankly—to be able to help you in the revision of your opera with my sincere and loyal advice. However, if you want to avoid *that*—well, that is a question of *will* and it is most certainly not a matter for discussion."<sup>3</sup> In the end Wagner became angry and went so far as to tell Cornelius that his *Cid* was a miscarriage. And, in a sense, he was right. The opera has never found a place in the repertory, though it was favorably received on its first performance in Weimar, May 21, 1865. Later Hermann Levi revived it in a discreetly altered form; a vocal score of this version was made by Ludwig Thuille. Had Cornelius listened to Wagner's well-intentioned criticism, we should have been the richer for one of the most beautiful of operas. The composer's own estimate of other sides of his work

<sup>3</sup>From the translation by M. M. Bozman (London, 1927).—Tr.

is a just one: "I am proud of my form, proud that despite my extremely compact dramatic action I have welded all speeches and replies into concise musical numbers, always giving the true melody—not the endless 'Tristan melody,' something I shall never imitate—to the singer."

Eventually Cornelius widened the scope of this artistic revolt against Wagner to include also their personal relations. The Pied Piper's efforts to lure him to Munich were vain. "I am to become the complete Kurvenal," Cornelius writes to one of his friends. "I have many qualifications for the role—even dog-like fidelity. What Wagner fails to understand is that I am at the same time a bit too independent in character and talent to play Zero to his Figure One. A slave cannot write a *Cid*."

Still Wagner did not give in, finally writing to Cornelius, on October 7, 1864, as follows:

Dear Peter!

I am specially commissioned by His Majesty King Ludwig II of Bavaria to invite you to come to Munich as soon as you are able, to pursue your art there, to execute the King's occasional orders and to help me, your friend, as a friend.

From the day of your arrival an annual salary of one thousand gulden will be assigned you from His Majesty's Exchequer.

Your affectionate friend,  
Richard Wagner.<sup>4</sup>

This time Cornelius consented. But his consent did not come from the heart.

An inner voice said: Do not go! His thousand gulden are only a temptation of the Devil's. Everyone about me said: This offer you must accept, this offer really amounts to something! I said: Keep after the *Cid*, never losing sight of him for a moment; wait for success and, relying on yourself alone, win your own place in the world. This I cannot do when I am with Wagner. He uses me up. The atmosphere about him is oppressive. He consumes and robs me of the breath of life.

The situation that met Cornelius on his arrival in Munich was not exactly calculated to allay his apprehensions, artistic or personal. An audience with the King brought a change. Ludwig asked for particulars of the première of the *Barber*, then spoke of Wagner, Liszt, and von Bülow, the *Cid*, *Lohengrin*, and *Siegfried*. But Cornelius dreaded increased social responsibility and the practical activity of the professional musician. "I must keep away from both, giving my strength and my time to my *one* objective—the writing of opera. I must write my masterpiece now—a scintillating, light-hearted, melodious work that will be a joy to

<sup>4</sup>From the translation by M. M. Bozman.—Tr.

hear." Everything in Munich was alien to him, and his one thought was "Away!"

In the eyes of the world my relations with Wagner are indefensible—and they are proving too much for me. Wagner neither knows nor imagines how trying he is with his everlasting ardor, his languishing after the fatal draught (*Verschmachten seit dem unseligen Trank*). Yet I cannot tell him—he does not understand, does not even suspect that our being together draws the very marrow from my soul—that I need solitude and, above all, freedom.

Cornelius accordingly stayed away from the *Tristan* premiere, traveling to Weimar for a performance of the *Cid*, something that irritated Wagner beyond measure and led him to threaten openly that he would have Cornelius deprived of his thousand gulden. Cornelius spoke his mind plainly to Princess Wittgenstein:

For all my admiration of Wagner's works since *Lohengrin*, I no longer have for them the full-throated "Aye" (the affirmation!) that becomes a friend on a thousand gulden salary. Before the *Cid* was performed, things were different—I could suspend judgment, remain expectant; now I am only too sure that I cannot follow the composer of *Tristan* and *Isolde* in my creative work. I must go my own way, spiritually independent. Today my friends may censure this; eventually they will realize that I am right.

Whereupon Cornelius sent Wagner a "cordial, enthusiastic" letter of farewell. Yet no definite break occurred at this time. Hans von Bülow intervened, and in the end the old friends clasped hands once more.

Cornelius apologized. "Wagner, I am heartily sorry—I have been stupid about many things."

"Nonsense!" Wagner replied. "Let us be men and forget about it."

From thenceforward their friendly relations continued without further serious disturbance. As Cornelius once said to Ritter: "One must simply accept Wagner for the unique being that he is, tolerate him, and—love him, for like everyone else he has lovable qualities after all." In the meantime Cornelius had become engaged, and it is probable that this engagement, to Fräulein Berta Jung, had a good deal to do with his conciliatory attitude. "I am quite reconciled to the thought of remaining here," he writes. "I seek to establish myself in Munich and talk to my friends of nothing but my hope of being happy here with you."

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Cornelius now buried himself once more in the search for operatic material and, master of comic opera that he was, hit

unfortunately upon the Edda, the source from which Wagner had already drawn the material for his monumental *Ring of the Nibelung*. "Have no fear that I shall become a Wagnerian," he writes to his bride. "Here is a well-spring of poetry from which many will be able to draw without quarreling among themselves. If there is such a thing as poetry, it is this, and it is only to be found through Wagner's operas. . . . If through them I attain what I seek, my third work shall be dedicated to him."

Cornelius called the new opera *Gunlöd*, and King Ludwig, with Hans and Cosima von Bülow, urged him to begin work on it. But he received a shock when he submitted his sketch to Wagner. "Yesterday I left Wagner's in low spirits. 'Away, away,' I told myself. Toward *Gunlöd* he is unfavorable from the start. Oh, this is much too strong! To what do I presume—his Nibelungen, whom he created solely for himself! !'" And Wagner persisted in this opinion, even later, when Cornelius read him the poem in *Triebischen* on August 10, 1868. "He is against my setting it to music, and most discreet and entirely right in what he says about it. Despite the painful, constrained feeling brought on by reading such a poem to Wagner, of all people, I was carried quite out of myself and still experience a familiar glow when I read the best passages. . . . When shall I ever write anything like it again?"

*Gunlöd* is first of all a poetic achievement. To appreciate the luxuriance of this noble verse, one has only to compare Cornelius's splendid text with its exceedingly meager original in the Edda. But the action drags in the second and third acts, especially in the third, and Wagner's criticism, about which we have no precise information, dealt presumably with this weakness. At the same time one may say that no operatic poem before or after Wagner can compare as language with *Gunlöd*, and that Wagner himself attained the same level of poetic diction in only one work—his *Parsifal*.

Cornelius must have begun his music for *Gunlöd* under a peculiarly unlucky star, for he had finished only the smallest part of it when he died at forty-nine. Attempts to complete the work have been unsuccessful. The only fragment occasionally heard in concert is Mottl's arrangement of *Gunlöd*'s first solo-scene. To judge from the very uneven sketches that Hasse has published, the music goes a step beyond the *Cid* in the direction of *Tristan* without entirely doing away with symmetric form or making use of any complicated system of leading-motives. The melodic invention is strangely beautiful, even individual, though sometimes marred by reminiscences of *Tristan* and the *Valkyrie*.

Shortly after his marriage Cornelius wrote to his bride of his ideal: "To find the true art-work of today in abandoning Wagner's

heaven-storming path, in planned, dispassionate charting and consolidating of the conquests of his best period." This ideal it was not given to him to realize. After seven years of marriage, the daily struggle for existence had entirely destroyed his delicate health: for a monthly salary of one hundred gulden he had seventeen classes to teach, and fifty students.

While Cornelius was killing himself with work in Munich, Wagner was beginning the most brilliant period of his career in Bayreuth. On the occasion of Wagner's sixtieth birthday, in honor of which Cornelius wrote a festival play, "Künstlerweihe," interpolating the New Year's music for 1835 that Wagner composed in Magdeburg, the two friends saw one another for the last time. But it was no longer the old Wagner. "We spent two days there and scarcely saw the master," Cornelius reports. "I can count the words that we exchanged." So ended a friendship.

Cornelius's life was also ending. Up to the last he entertained all sorts of ambitious plans. "Do you know," he writes to a friend, "that beyond *Gunlöt*, nourished with my heart's blood, I dream of a music drama that will contain everything I believe I have won in the *Cid* and *Gunlöt* and that will be at the same time as entirely and solely mine as the *Barber*? Those who live shall see it." But already he was himself a dying man. On October 26, 1874, he passed away in Mainz, the city of his birth becoming his burial place.

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However strenuously Cornelius may have contended for success as a dramatic musician, he was essentially a lyric poet. So he called himself, and in his works music and poetry go hand in hand. He was no symphonist, and even in his dramatic music lyricism sometimes threatens to gain the upper hand at the expense of stage effect. He is most at home in his solo- and part-songs, a type of composition to which he devoted a large share of his creative activity. Here we encounter noblest maturity, highest perfection, and with the *Barber of Bagdad* his works of this kind will keep his name alive as long as men love poetry or are stirred by music.

(Translated by W. Oliver Strunk.)

## NOTES ON SOUTH AFRICAN NATIVE MUSIC

By W. L. SPEIGHT

THE South African native seems always to have had an ear for music. For a long time he remained comparatively free from foreign influences. Today he tends to adopt European instruments and methods of singing, and, although South Africa has yet to produce a native composer to compare favorably with Coleridge-Taylor, the time will undoubtedly come when such a man will appear there.

To trace the evolution of native music in South Africa, it is necessary to delve into the works of early visitors. We find in the journal or log-book of Vasco da Gama's first voyage to the Cape, *The Roteiro*, one of the first references to the musical side of native life: "About two hundred negroes . . . forthwith began to play on flutes, some producing high notes and others low ones, thus making a pretty harmony for negroes who are not expected to be musicians." Over one hundred and fifty years later, van Riebeek in his *Journal* mentions that, when Peter Cruythoff's expedition to Namaqualand got in touch with the Hottentots, the explorers heard tunes played on strange reed-instruments. The Hottentots played also to van Riebeek at his newly-built castle. In his *Journal*, he says that after Sousoa, chief of the Chainouquas, had, on one occasion, partaken of meat and drink, "we . . . played for him on the claversingel, which appeared to please him immensely." Sousoa, in return, performed tunes on the *gorah* and on reed-flutes.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Dutch Governor at the Cape, Simon van der Stel, set out on an expedition to Namaqualand, and, thinking that music would have some effect on the aborigines, he took with him several oboes, two trumpets, and about five violins. He was much surprised to find that the Namaqua Hottentots had devised musical instruments of their own. One of these is described by the traveler, Le Vaillant, who calls it a *rabououin*. He reports that it was thrummed with the fingers and was used to produce dance-tunes. It consisted, he says, of "a triangular piece of board, with three strings made of

intestines, supported by a bridge, which may be stretched at pleasure by means of pegs, like those of our own instruments in Europe; it is indeed, nothing else than a guitar with three strings."

Many think that the Hottentots copied this instrument from the guitar, which they must have seen in use among the early settlers at the Cape. They performed also on the gorah, an instrument which they made and played in their own way, but which they probably copied from the Bushmen, who used the instrument until comparatively recent times.

The Bushmen were undoubtedly unique in at least one respect: in the gorah, they possessed an only means of producing music.<sup>1</sup> They probably discovered it during their orgies. At first they may have blown through hollowed bones, and the results may have inspired them to fashion instruments of more advanced types, until eventually they produced a means of making music, so like a bow in appearance that many thought it a weapon. This quaint musical instrument consisted of two ribs of a large antelope, or other big animal, smoothed on the inside until all inequalities had been removed, and lashed together with sinews. How many centuries this instrument was in use is not known; but what Burchell, another visitor to South Africa, wrote of it over one hundred years ago seems to have been true of it, in the main, at any period:

In its principle and use it is . . . a stringed and wind instrument combined: thus it agrees with the Æolian harp. But with respect to the principle on which its different tones are produced, it may be classed with the trumpet or French horn; while in the nature and quality of the sound which it gives, at least in the hands of one who is master of it, this strange instrument approaches the violin. It consists merely of a slender stick or bow, on which a string of catgut is strained. But to the lower end of this string a flat piece, of about an inch and a half long, of the quill of an ostrich is attached so as to constitute a part of the length of the string.



(Illustration after Burchell)

This quill, being applied to the lips, is made to vibrate by strong inspirations, and expirations, of the breath; each of which ending with an unusual degree of strength has always the effect of forcing out the upper octave, exactly in the same way as produced on the flute.

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the absence of vocal music, see *infra*, p. 348.

The gorah, under a variety of names, is still in widespread use among many South African peoples. It is interesting to note that the appellations are derived from names of birds, "gorah" itself being derived from *gorab*, which, in the Korana language, means "raven."

Percival R. Kirby goes fully into the history of the instrument, its construction, and methods of performance upon it, in his paper, "The Gora and its Bantu Successors."<sup>2</sup>

Many other native instruments apparently derive from the bow. Some are constructed with the bow-string as their principal part, but in others a tough slip of palm-leaf, usually no more than half an inch in width, replaces it. A powerful and somewhat congenial tone results, its resonance reinforced by blowing. The pitches, however, are restricted to the instrument's principal tone and to a slight range of subsidiary ones.

In some form or other, what may be termed "the native violin" is widely distributed in Africa. It consists of a hollow gourd, over the top of which a piece of skin is tightly drawn. A long wooden handle protrudes, and, from a peg at the bottom of this, a cord passes over the top of the gourd. The instrument is played by means of a bow, and is used to produce a certain persistent, hypnotic tune, especially treasured by the native. The form of instrument in use in South Africa today is obviously an improvement upon the old Bantu *igubu*, but some believe that the *igubu* is a degenerate stage of the more highly developed violin. In its way, the latter constitutes an important step in native musical evolution. While it may be an imitation of a similar European instrument, observations so far made do not indicate that it is.

The *malimba* is a well-known instrument in the Rand compounds, and is one of the most advanced native instruments at present used in South Africa. The *marimba* of Central Africa and a similar instrument now appearing on music-hall stages are closely related to the *malimba*. The kind used in the compounds consists of a crude, rectangular frame of bent wood. About ten thin, well-tuned strips of hard wood or plate are fastened to this by a raw-hide lacing. They provide a definite musical scale, for they

<sup>2</sup>In *Bantu Studies*, Vol. V, No. 2, June, 1931. It may be helpful to supplement Burchell's description of the gorah with this one by Kirby, taken from his "The Music and Musical Instruments of the Korana," *Bantu Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 2, June, 1932: "The *goras*, as is well-known, consists of a fairly straight stick with the bark removed, and seasoned suitably. A string of sinew is fixed to a spatulate piece of quill taken from the feather of a *korhaan*. The string is passed through a hole in the tip of the quill and spliced into itself, never knotted. The quill itself is lashed to one end of the stick by a piece of sinew or *riem*, and at the other end whipped to the stick. . . . By applying the quill to the mouth, and inspiring and expiring vigorously, certain harmonics of the string are powerfully produced."

are graduated in size. Most of the strips are made of pitch-pine. They have beneath them tin canisters which vary in size and which, like the gourds below the strings of the native violins, are open at the top, and are so arranged that they amplify the sounds released above them.

A native orchestra consists on an average of thirty of these instruments. Its first row contains all the smallest sized malimbas, and the second row contains the malimbas of the next size, which are very much like the smaller ones, except that their powerful, liquid tones are an octave lower. The last row consists of the large instruments, which the musicians play standing up. These instruments supply a sort of "bass," which embraces only about five tones. All the malimbas are played with soft, rubber-headed canes or with sticks. There are usually twelve instruments in the first row, ten in the second, and eight in the third.

The famous Kafir piano is tuned to a variant of the pentatonic scale. This piano, an advanced form of native musical instrument, is played by twanging the iron keys with the thumbs or the tips of the fingers. It is made of a calabash or hollowed piece of wood with several pieces of iron, shell, or wood, attached to the top in much the same way as that in which metal tongues are fixed in a toy music-box. The tone is amplified by means of a resonator, which is simply a bisected gourd fastened to the instrument by a short chain. Sometimes the performers supplement the tones of the piano with the sound of jingling shells.

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Mungo Park, among other famous travellers, has had much to say of the native's ability at improvisation. Once, exhausted and depressed, he arrived at a native kraal, and, after the inhabitants had given him food and drink, they laid out a sleeping-place for him in a hut. He says that thereafter a native sang or chanted:

The winds roared and the rains fell. The poor white man, faint and weary, came and sat under our tree. He has no mother to bring him milk, no wife to grind his corn.

This was repeated monotonously and punctuated occasionally by the chorus:

Let us pity the white man, for no mother has he!

Natives are very clever in making current events the subjects of songs and chants.

Their languages, especially those of the Bantus, in themselves have a sonorous music, and in many ways the natives have developed the best vocal qualities of this music in their chants. The most impressive chants are those dealing with fighting, especially the tunes sung before battle. The Zulu method of fighting required the warriors to form columns arranged in a crescent, and there were deadly threats implied in the hisses which they produced while they mustered into columns or advanced upon the enemy. While shield crashed against shield, and while they wielded the stabbing assegai, they continued the chant begun during the furious, terrifying onslaught.

Natives are used to shouting over enormous distances, a practice that leads to a tremendous development of the vocal organs. Many European observers have heard Zulus, separated from each other by hundreds of yards, carrying on conversations. The tones employed are reported to have been very deep, but with an unexpected sonority and timbre.

Although the Bantus are much superior to the Hottentots in physique and intelligence, they lack the imagination of the latter. The Hottentots, however, rarely express themselves in song, which is restricted to a few very special occasions. The Bantus, on the other hand, are fond of celebrating victorious hunts or battles with laudatory chants, in which the merits of chiefs and principal warriors or huntsmen are lyrically praised. Many tribes single out a man whose special duty it is to recite these breathless ditties. The Hottentots may, at one time, have sung during their dances, but the Bushmen probably never broke into vocal music. They might have overcome certain language difficulties, but the conditions under which they lived made silence a necessity, for they had to strike swiftly, preferably by means of surprise attacks, at those who would otherwise hunt them.

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The jazz that reaches modern ballrooms is, by virtue of the metamorphosis it has experienced, undoubtedly American. But it is with Africa's crude native-music that the process of transformation began. Without great strain on the imagination one can recognize definite similarities between the monotonous productions that delight the native mind and those that fill western ballrooms with discordant sounds. Africa discovered the Charleston long before America did, but, while in America the Charleston

was, during its rage, the most vigorous dance practised, in Africa it was only the mildest part of a frenzied series of jumps, stamps, and curvets. The African dances are a maze of high-kicking patterns, brandishings of weapons, lunges, and thrusts; and, when the natives have expended so much energy that a rest is essential, they drop into an easy series of Charleston steps, and then break into a frenzy again. But, it must be remarked, theirs is the Charleston unattenuated by any decorous rulings of the censor.

The jazz note is not so noticeable in native songs composed by laborers in the mines and factories. These songs describe the work underground, and introduce such subjects as drilling and breaking up the rock, accidents, the treatment received from European miners, and what the singers intend to do with their pay. The tribesmen use music also in ridiculing, with frank, untempered comments, both each other and members of different tribes. A martial note distinguishes many of the chants of the Zulus and other native groups, but their hymns and songs include examples of gentler types also.

There is something graceful and pathetic in the Kafir hymn of the afflicted, in which, as rendered into English by John Crombie from Arbousset's French translation, the women wail:

We are left outside,  
We are left for sorrow,  
We are left to despair,  
Which increases our misery!  
Oh, that there were a refuge in heaven!  
That there were a pot there and a fire!  
That there were found a place for me!  
Oh, that I had wings to fly thither!

Most Zulu dances are accompanied by suitable songs which often are clever improvisations. One dance is supposed to depict the tragedy following an outbreak of smallpox. In it the old men limp about and simulate pain. The accompanying song goes:

I feel pity when I see smallpox making its ravages and spoiling the face.  
Here at home in the village we no longer live.  
We no longer are kind to each other, even among relatives.  
It is the fault of this terrible disease.  
This disease is truly terrible, my lord!  
It has driven the son-in-law from his home;  
He goes, but returns with cruel words.  
The old woman comes this way. . . .  
She is turned out; she goes away and dies in the bush.

One of the Shangaan songs, as translated by the Rev. Junod, runs:

I am looking for someone to put leeches on me.  
This complaint, this cursed lumbago is terrible!  
In our village . . . Oh, my mother, alas! this trouble prevents me from  
walking—  
Take the handle of my hoe.  
I start for the fields to tell them;  
And this thing stops me!  
And it annoys my relative to see me sitting down doing no work.  
She may well be annoyed, the beauty, the good walker!

The tunes to which most of these songs are sung are generally restricted to a few tones. The limitation makes for monotony of effect; but despite this fact, and although few of the songs have more than traditional value, there are signs that modern natives with some musical training are taking deep interest in them, possibly for the purpose of rendering them in the European manner. Whether the Europeanisation of native tunes should be encouraged or not is possibly a matter for difference of opinion, but it would be a pity if the African music, with the characteristic scales and intervals of the native orchestra, were entirely submerged in the swamping wave of musical education that must, sooner or later, sweep through the South African native territories. At present musical education is restricted to songs of the Moody and Sankey type, with tonic-dominant-subdominant harmonization, but the use of even such material may prove a stepping-stone towards eventually wide native appreciation of European classical music.

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Writing about the Shangaans in "The Life of a South African Tribe," the Rev. Henri A. Junod, of the East Coast Swiss Mission, throws considerable light on native music. He believes the natives have a good deal of dramatic ability, which is expressed only in dances accompanied by songs. Zulu songs, however, are replacing many of the old Shangaan airs, and boys and girls no longer go into the bush for long periods to learn the tribal dances and songs as part of their initiation ritual, for native general education in South Africa is at present under European influence. But this education is, as might be expected, quite elementary.

Usually only those matriculate who wish to become teachers or to adopt one of the few professions open to natives, but, even so, it is seldom that a boy goes beyond the South African equivalent of Form Two. During his short period at school, however, the

average native, whatever may be the general disinterest implied by his tendency to leave, manifests a deep love for music, but, as yet, his musical instruction has been restricted to the vocal side, and that instruction, as we shall have occasion to observe again, is not wholly adequate. It is regarded as too expensive to teach native pupils to play instruments such as the violin or the piano.

The indifference shown, and the failure to realize the specifically cultural value of music, are especially unfortunate, since natives seem to lean toward musical expression of feelings and thoughts even more than does the average European. A music-lesson to the native child is something into which he can enter with full enthusiasm. When he sings, his face usually expresses delight and interest, and often his whole body moves briskly to the rhythm of the tune. The average European child, compared to a native South African child, may be said to sing listlessly.

Occasionally special short training-courses are arranged for teachers, assembled from a wide district, and, although much time is spent in enlarging their knowledge of mathematics, history, hygiene, and similar subjects, music, even in these courses, receives no attention. It seems to be an educational rule, all over the country, that music has no scholastic value. It is generally treated as an extra subject to be crammed in at any odd moment; not as a cultural force to be regarded seriously. In some schools it is the custom to drop music out of the curricula as pupils advance to the higher stages.

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Dudley Kidd once wrote:

The natives laugh at our singing and say that it is very strange. When they hear white men sing for the first time they often burst out laughing; yet they pick up our tunes very quickly, the men falling into the bass parts without any effort or training.<sup>3</sup>

Today the average native will still display the same aptitude in learning the white man's tunes and, with some education and a little musical knowledge, will possibly show a more enthusiastic appreciation in listening to good music than the European with similar intellectual attainments. To be sure, many of the native musicians who undertake to render well-known European tunes use only the five-tone scale, the fourth and seventh tones of our scale being modified. Mission choirs in Pondoland, in particular,

<sup>3</sup>A fondness for the lower notes is still apparent in much of the native part-singing in the schools.

cannot deal with the fourth and seventh steps of the diatonic scale, and, for this reason, missionaries there favor the use of tunes in which these steps do not play an important part or, better still, do not appear at all.

But when his tendency to make European tunes "go native" is pointed out to the more progressive singer, he will struggle hard to overcome it, and the ambition, thus shown, explains why natives of the more enlightened types often attempt music too difficult for their powers. But there are some native choirs in the neighborhood of mission stations, which, under the direction of native conductors, have, as a result of that same ambition, been able to render the sol-fa of many difficult anthems. The main criticism that can be made against their performances is that the singers always ignore the words. For recreation they are likely to render Handel, Elgar, Bantock, Mendelssohn, or other famous composers. "The Heavens are telling" from Haydn's *Creation* is a great favorite with large native choirs, which have a leaning also toward *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* by Coleridge-Taylor and "Lift thine eyes" from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

With their deeper voices, male natives are undoubtedly better singers than the women, who have not been able to overcome the habit of singing with the teeth close together. As a result, their voices take on an unpleasant nasal twang. The voice production of the native singer, whatever the sex, deserves much more attention than it has received.

The women have not approached the singing of European music with the same enthusiasm as the men. Their comparative indifference is doubtless due largely to the slight advances as yet made by them in partaking of the white man's culture. Their evident potentialities, however, make it clear that, with proper training, they could be developed into very pleasing singers.

The natives are natural harmonizers. On hearing a melody played over, they will, without premeditation, drop into part-singing. They are especially fond of thirds and sixths which they like to render with full sonority.

Occasionally, when singing from score, the performers carry on merrily a full octave higher than required. But, though they may be singing at the wrong pitch, they are not likely to lose touch with the rhythm. Sometimes one or two embark upon a descant of sorts, which may be not at all unmusical. The tendency, thus displayed, to improvise parts is noticed also among the children in the native schools. There they show facility in learning the tonic sol-fa notation, and usually require only a year or two in

which to master the ordinary intervals of the diatonic scale well enough to read music at sight.

With the mass of the natives, the gramophone will probably be the most potent force in musical development. Cheap instruments are to be found in kraals all over the country, and, now that the natives have progressed beyond the stage in which it was a delight merely to hear the human voice issuing from the instrument, they are evincing a preference for particular types of tune. Ballroom-jazz records are often sold to them, but are not popular, even with the most primitive. The natural musical taste of these people impels them to select tunes of more substance. The manufacture of records of native choirs and singers is a comparatively recent venture which is likely to develop considerably in the near future. At present these records are of natives singing European compositions, but, as the appreciation of the natives for their own music develops, an attempt may be made by them to render it with artistry impossible in the kraal, and they may themselves create a demand for recordings of it, expertly performed.

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There will eventually be South African native composers to effect such things as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and H. Ballanta Taylor have accomplished, even though the achievements of these two men transcend what public opinion in South Africa is today inclined to credit to native capacity. South African orchestras play Coleridge-Taylor's music frequently, and it is enjoyed by some of the very people who seem to overlook the native's right to advance musically. These people believe, apparently, that the southern natives are without artistic abilities, but, in thinking thus, they ignore the fact that most native primitive arts and crafts reveal a striving to express inner feelings through artistic media. What the natives of West Africa or the Negroes of America have done for music, the Bantus of South Africa in their time may also do. There can be little doubt that, with the advancement of their mental horizon, they will take a widening interest in artistic matters, and that it is quite within range of the possible that they will eventually make significant contributions to musical literature.

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

**S**TENDHAL, indefatigable and ardent lover, had three musical loves: Mozart, Cimarosa, and Rossini. They are birds of a feather, though of widely different wing-spread. "The Swan of Pesaro," the youngest of the three, holds the middle between the lark of Aversa and the Jovian eagle of Salzburg. The names of the three recur with frequency in Stendhal's writings. He often wavered to which belonged the crown. Love makes blind, or nearly so. To Rossini he devoted a whole book; it is a long declaration of love. It suffers from the exaggerations and inaccuracies peculiar to amorous confessions. It suffers from the author's proximity to his subject and the resultant astigmatic vision. But it has the merit of having been the first literary homage to Rossini, when the "life" that Stendhal was describing had run for barely thirty years, and "The Barber of Seville" (first performed on Feb. 20, 1816, in Rome) was a mere child of seven.

Since then a great deal has been written about Rossini; nor apparently has the last word been said about him. Within recent years the distinguished Italian musicologist, Giuseppe Radiciotti, completed his exhaustive study, in three volumes, of the master's life and works. Until now we had no adequate book on Rossini in English. It has been supplied by Mr. Francis Toye,<sup>1</sup> whose excellent life of Verdi was reviewed in these pages not long ago. On a smaller scale—and properly so—than his Verdi, his Rossini has all the good qualities of the earlier book: careful and thorough survey of the material, and an agreeable style of writing. That Mr. Toye is indebted for most of his facts to Radiciotti, he handsomely acknowledges.<sup>2</sup> But whoever has had in his hand the Italian's weighty tomes, will pick up Mr. Toye's engaging and convenient reduction—and redaction—with a sense of relief and gratitude. For Mr. Toye's labors have not been confined to the

<sup>1</sup>"Rossini, A Study in Tragic-Comedy." By Francis Toye. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. \$3.75.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Toye states that because of "an inability to obtain the scores . . . in the case of the least-known works" he was obliged to follow Radiciotti "a little more blindly" than he should have wished. This inability does not speak well for European libraries. Now, Mr. Toye in a list of Rossini's compositions, appended to his book, enumerates 38 operas. In the Music Division of the Library of Congress at Washington he would have found the full orchestral scores of 32 of these operas in 39 different copies, and the vocal scores of 36 of these operas in 80 editions. As the late O. G. Sonneck, to whom the Washington collection of opera scores owes its extraordinary comprehensiveness, frequently pointed out, the place to study the history of operatic music today is the Library of Congress. It might also have interested Mr. Toye to know that he could have seen in Washington the Six String Quartets written by Rossini in 1804, at the age of twelve, in the composer's holograph.

distillation of an extract; he is too independent a thinker to be content with mere condensing or selecting. He orders and re-orders, comments, rectifies where necessary, and gives of his own unstintingly. In the case of Rossini, to be sure, he had a task that any writer should delight in; Mr. Toye is very near the truth when he says that "Never in the whole history of music has there been anybody quite like Rossini." And this unique personality has too often suffered from "summary dismissal" by our pundits. Mr. Toye's is not a plea in defense; that was not needed. But nevertheless, no one could "present the case" more competently or persuasively than he has done. What English readers did need, was a readable and full account of a truly remarkable man and his musical epoch. Mr. Toye has furnished it.

In the opening paragraph of his Preface, Mr. Toye says: "To the best of my belief there is no demand whatever for a life of Rossini in English. Supply, however, sometimes creates demand, and Rossini as a figure is so fascinating that people may eventually wonder why they were content to remain for so long in ignorance of his extraordinary career. Moreover, there are undoubted signs of a renewed interest in his music other than the immortal *Barber of Seville*." These signs have been marked here in America, where Maestro Toscanini has taken evident satisfaction in unearthing some of Rossini's buried and forgotten overtures. Some of the critics have greeted these particular signs with the usual "summary dismissal," if they have not ill-temperedly condemned them. Mr. Toye observes that, "as a matter of fact, these overtures are little masterpieces from every point of view. . . . Possibly the very attractiveness of these overtures has led some of our musicians unduly to underrate them." That applies also to other works of Rossini. And yet, some of his music, precisely in our day, should go a long way to counteract the nervous irritation and morbid tendencies of this age, should help to sweeten the temper of our critics as well as of less fastidious and enlightened listeners; because of its freshness, gaiety, and—above all—its "musicality." Heinrich Heine's opinion that Rossini's music possessed "eternal suavity and serene sweetness" still holds good. And if there is any element noticeably absent in modern life and peculiarly wanting in modern music, it is serenity.

Rossini's life presents an absorbing problem. He was a youth of brilliant gifts, who, despite the customary adversities, conquered the world of music, and then took a prolonged holiday. It lasted for nearly forty years. Mr. Toye's parallel between these conquests and those of Napoleon, with his Elba or Saint Helena,

seems rather forced. After having achieved supremacy, Rossini was not vanquished, he did not abdicate, he was not exiled; he merely survived himself, not however without getting a good deal of fun and glory out of the survival. (Gustave Charpentier, composer of "Louise" [1900!] and Member of the French Institute, is a living example of the type.) Mr. Toye tries to explain the phenomenon by averring that Rossini was "timid, self-indulgent, highly neurotic." So he probably was. But he also had sagacity and common sense. He realized his limitations. And he had the extreme good fortune of being able to smile at them. His caustic wit disarmed his enemies; his humour dislodged tragedy. As a young man he conversed with the aging Beethoven in Vienna; as an old and venerated master he chatted cordially with the youthful Wagner in Paris. He lived through musical revolutions as well as political ones.

Times change; but not so certain situations, except for those who prefigure them. We wonder whether Mr. Toye was conscious of the neat turn of irony presented by juxtaposing two passages in his book, on pages 97 and 172 respectively. The first refers to the extraordinary success of Rossini in Vienna, in 1822, which surpassed that of all the German composers, including Beethoven and Weber (Schubert did not count). The Viennese were mad with Rossinitis. Mr. Toye says: "As a matter of fact, it is clear that it was Rossini's success rather than Rossini's music which really irritated Weber. He could not forgive his greater popularity, the possession of a facility denied to himself." Compare this passage with the following, which refers to a period some twenty years (only!) later: "It was the exclusiveness of the fashionable craze for Meyerbeer's music, rather than the success of the music as such, which discouraged Rossini. There should have been room for both of them, but, if these people wanted nothing else but Meyerbeer, he could and would not compete." A long sermon might be preached with these two passages for a text; and it would not necessarily have to be a dull one.

To some 240 pages of biography, Mr. Toye appends 15 pages "Mainly for Musicians." They deal with "Rossini's Influence on Music," "Rossini as an Innovator," and "Rossini as a Composer." While far from being another "summary dismissal," it cannot be said that any mainly musical reader is likely to derive much benefit from these pages, nor a clearer understanding of the causes and effects as represented by the composer Rossini. We hear practically nothing of his musical antecedents; the name of the Italianized Simone Mayr, teacher of Donizetti, is mentioned once or twice in

passing, in the body of the book, but a proper appreciation of his school, of its advances in orchestration and other characteristics, is sadly wanting. If Rossini was an innovator, he also was distinctly an heir, like every artist, even the most original. And Rossini's heritage was of no mean proportion. It seems like quibbling to talk of Rossini's "faulty education," his "lack of self-criticism," and then acknowledge him "a consummate technician." If his approach to music was "instinctive rather than intellectual," it remains a matter for regret that not more composers can find the same approach.

Mr. Toye continues the myth that Rossini was the first to write down the actual *fioriture* to be performed by his singers. That Rossini "understood the human voice as few other composers have understood it" is certain. Indeed, instead of saying, as does Mr. Toye, that "Rossini's operatic career might be summarized as a tragedy of bad librettos," the composer might be called a victim of good voices and a no-good public. Our public has improved, and our singers, by and large, have deteriorated. Rossini was the most brilliant product of his social environment, which was extremely limited, and of his musical epoch, which was a very short one. His canny realization of the latter fact probably had as much to do with the abrupt cessation of his opera writing as did Rossini's reputed indolence and sluggishness. *Tell* was a magnificent gesture. No composer ever left the ring with a more elegant knock-out. After that, Rossini did only a little sparring now and then, and the *Petite Messe Solennelle* of 1864 showed that he had lost nothing of his old science and nimbleness (or of his gentle waggishness) after three-score-and-ten. But he was unable, or refused, to learn new tricks. He did not grow in the sense in which Verdi or Wagner developed. Mr. Toye calls Verdi's *Falstaff* "definitely a pendant to *The Barber*." It would seem to us that *Falstaff* could never have been written without *Die Meistersinger*. Mr. Toye's book appropriately closes with Wagner's estimate of Rossini—one of the most lucid and generous he ever made: "Rossini will never be judged aright until someone attempts an intelligent history of the culture of our current [first half of the 19th] century. . . . Were this character of our age correctly drawn, it would then be possible to allot to Rossini also his true and fitting station in it. And that station would be no lowly one, for, with the same title as Palestrina, Bach, and Mozart belonged to their age, Rossini belongs to his." That is good enough company.

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It is conceivable that some of Ignace Paderewski's admirers and well-wishers might hotly debate the question whether the two biographies of his, recently published—the one by Charles Phillips,<sup>3</sup> the other by Rom Landau<sup>4</sup>—constitute an embarrassment of riches or a calamitous deficiency. Both authors seized upon their subject by right of eminent domain. They made their own, with sovereign powers, both Poland and *pan* Paderewski. Their claims as friends of a downtrodden nation and worshippers of a conqueror pianist are undisputed. Both authors fulfil the requirements of sympathy and intimacy with their twin-topics. Both authors, writing of a living man, could not help thinking that what they wrote would be read by him, or help wishing that, as he read, he would approve. But neither personal nor national histories necessarily gain in reliability by such considerations.

The Phillips biography has one great advantage over Mr. Landau's book: it aims at, and often attains, literary distinction. Mr. Landau's style is content, for the most part, to jog along at a pedestrian gait; occasionally it is lax or turgid. If the book of Mr. Landau is no less well "documented" than that of Mr. Phillips, it makes the impression of a more hasty performance—so far as the actual writing is concerned—of having been rushed through its final stages. Misprints and obvious errors abound (e.g. "In 1876 Modjeska described the young artist of twenty-six," read 1886; the unaccountable intrusion of the letter *v* in such names as "Montesqvuiou" and "Tervnina"; the odd and consistent "Volnynia" for Volhynia; the double derailment of "*le jurae*" for *de jure*; etc., etc.). Mr. Landau inclines towards the mannerism—prevalent in French and German—which in English has been derisively called "elegant variation." We refer to such circumlocutions as "the young artist from Podolia" and "Poland's finest actress." They cloy and irritate. On the side of inelegance we have the picture—though perhaps accurate—of a youthful Paderewski placating the raving mænads of the concert hall who storm the platform, by giving them "encore after encore with the sweat pouring off his forehead." Where were the Saint Veronicas? The death of Paderewski's first wife is recorded in the following characteristic sentence: "It mattered, however, when at the end of the year, satisfactory as far as love and romance were concerned,

<sup>3</sup>"Paderewski, The Story of a Modern Immortal." By Charles Phillips. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1933. \$4.00. The reviews of the lives of Paderewski and de Reszke appeared originally in *The Saturday Review of Literature* for June 2, 1934, and are reprinted here by courtesy of the editor, Mr. Henry Seidel Canby.

<sup>4</sup>"Ignace Paderewski, Musician and Statesman." By Rom Landau. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1934. \$3.00.

but economically extremely hard and bitter, his young wife died in childbirth." Words in awkward hands become dangerous tools.

Though both are lavish in technical details, neither Mr. Phillips (who had the valuable help of Mr. Sigismund Stojowski) nor Mr. Landau has given an adequate account of Paderewski the pianist. The proficiency of the virtuoso, the fascination of the person, are easily grasped and not difficult to describe. To explain the limitations of both demands greater insight.

Whatever objections may have been raised to some of Paderewski's pianistic methods, he remains one of the very great masters of the instrument. Whatever laurels have been heaped upon Paderewski's unselfish patriotism, as a statesman he was no more than an enthusiastic amateur. The extraordinary lesson he presents is the fact that true mastery is not impaired by methods open to criticism, and that ardent bungling cannot be saved or made right by the best of intentions. If it is the lesson, it also is the tragedy of Paderewski's life. Neither Mr. Phillips nor Mr. Landau makes it clear whether, to Poland and Polish politics, Paderewski in the end was not more of a liability than an asset. Neither dares raise the question whether it was not misapplied ambition, nurtured by the noble and unquestioning love for a perversely ambitious wife of failing mind, that created this liability.

Some years ago a story was current the authenticity of which we do not hesitate to question. But, like many a fable that exaggerates, it comes nearer palpable and brutal truth, than does polite half-truth. The story ran thus: It was at the Belvedere in Warsaw, during Paderewski's brief premiership. Marshal Pilsudski, head of the State, known as caring little for the comforts or conveniences of his friends and colleagues, sent word to Paderewski, known as a late riser, that he wished to see him on most important business at the early hour of eight o'clock in the morning. Punctually Paderewski arrived at Pilsudski's quarters, only to be told that the Marshal was still in his bath. Visibly annoyed, Paderewski offered to wait, but he was told that the Marshal asked him to the bathroom. Pilsudski, in the tub, begged Paderewski to close the door behind him and take the only available seat. Whereupon Pilsudski explained the reason for the unusual place and time of conference as the only opportunity he could think of to discuss some weighty and extremely confidential matters under conditions that would automatically exclude the presence of Mme. Paderewska.

Mr. Landau, with strokes that he wants delicate and soft, sketches faintly the final scenes in the family drama. Paderewski's

figure emerges from them more heroic than ever, also more human and more lovable. After the disappointing interlude as Poland's Premier, he took to the road again as the World's Premier Pianist. After the loss of Helenka Paderewska, he returned to commune with that larger family, his faithful public. New generations were ready to acclaim him. Commanding the respect, the affection of everyone, Paderewski continues to exert the power of his art and the magic of his personality. Both will some day be appraised and described more penetratingly, more impartially, even more vividly than Mr. Phillips and Mr. Landau succeeded in doing. The best and most readable part of Mr. Landau's book is the long Postscript, "Conversations at Riond Bosson." They offer good biographical material, but are no more biography on a high plane—level with the loftiness and grandeur of Paderewski—than is the rest of the book. We are reminded again how much keener were the eye and mind of Marcel Schwob, as a biographer, in his "Imaginary Lives." That seems the ultimate problem: to tell the truth imaginatively.

As long ago as 1857 the Polish pianist Alfred Sowinski published a biographical dictionary of 600 pages entitled *Les Musiciens Polonais*. "Poland is not yet lost!" She has continued in her lavish breeding of remarkable musicians. As if to remind us of the fact, Clara Leiser's life of Jean de Reszke<sup>5</sup> (and of his brother Edouard) follows closely on the heels of the two Paderewski biographies. It is a full length portrait, omitting no detail, painted against a live and busy background. The numerous letters, reprints of criticisms sweet and sour, anecdotes good and less so, illustrations and appendices, make of this volume a rich mine of information concerning one of the most brilliant eras in operatic history. What is written, by Mr. Walter Johnstone-Douglas, in a chapter on "Jean de Reszke's Principles of Singing" tries to do justice to the great singer's amazing success as a teacher. Miss Leiser has admirably caught and reproduced the glamour of a personality and of a period. In a book that abounds in French, German, and Italian quotations, it is a pleasure to commend the careful proof-reading. What a pity that Jean de Reszke arrived just a little too soon for the orthophonic record and the sound-films.

<sup>5</sup>"Jean de Reszke, and the Great Days of Opera." By Clara Leiser. New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1934. \$3.75.

C. E.



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